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The Beaver

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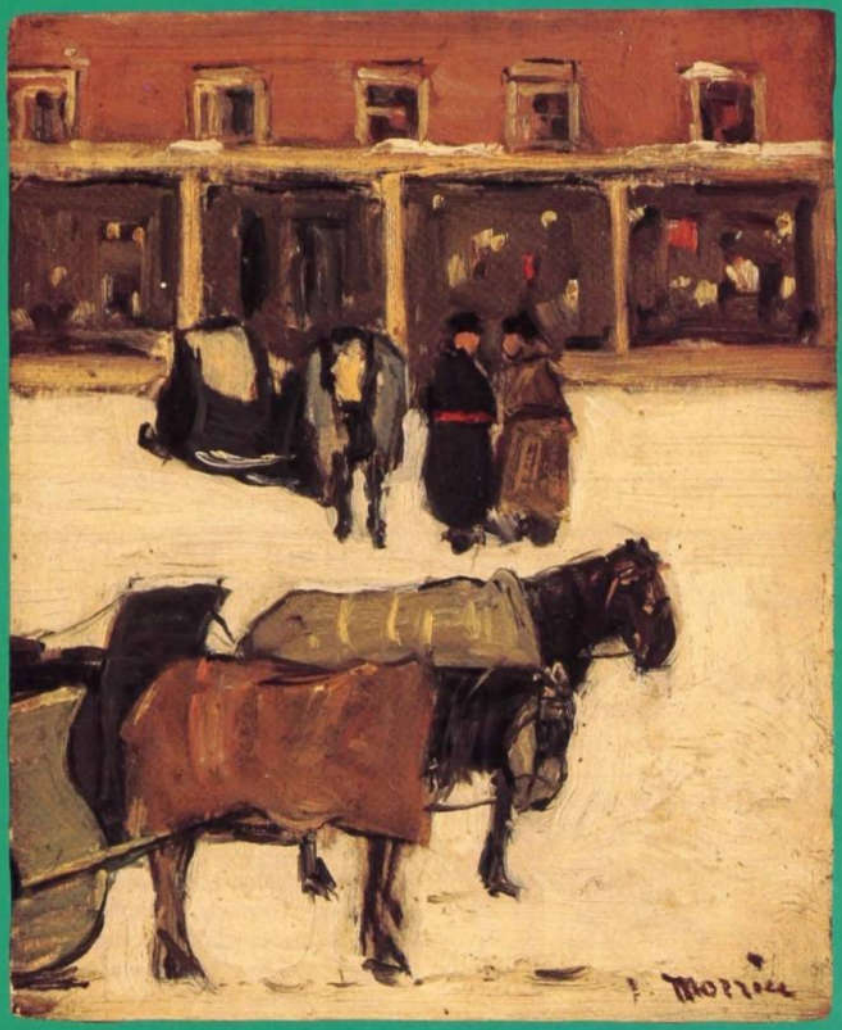
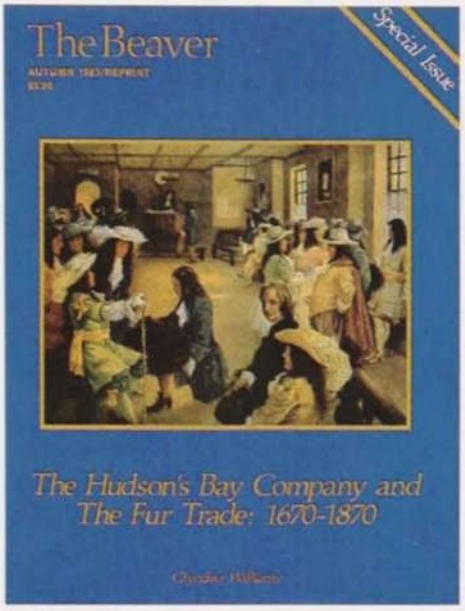


Free Trade 1854
Victorian Theatrical Sensations
Women in the Klondike
The Hat That Made Canada



THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AND THE FUR TRADE 1670-1870

By GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

86 pages. Illustrated

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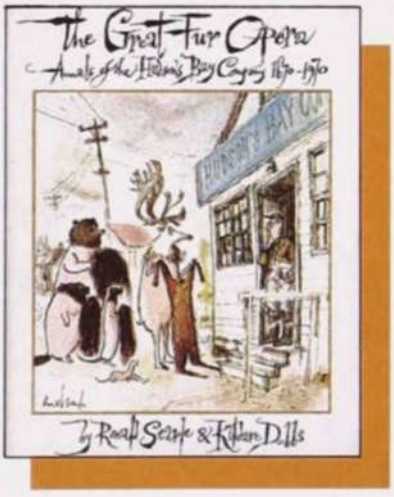

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Winter street with horses and sleighs, circa 1905, by J.W. Morrice. Art Gallery of Ontario.

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The Beaver

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VICTORIAN TEMPTATIONS

By Mary Shortt

Stern disapproval of worldly amusements was much in vogue during the nineteenth century in English-speaking countries, and theatre, as the most conspicuous of such amusements, was widely condemned. Even in the British provinces of North America, where theatrical performances were rare indeed at the beginning of the century, many people considered them a serious threat to public morality.

An early triumph of this puritanical attitude over "jollity, mirth and frivolity" was recorded by William Lyon Mackenzie in his *Colonial Advocate* when he found only a meagre audience at a performance by actors from Rochester, New York, in "the pious town of York" one night in late 1825. This victory was short-lived, however, for just three days later he reported that the same troupe was greeted by a packed house composed of the "rank and fashion of York" — members of Parliament, cabinet ministers, officers of the garrison, other gentlemen and ladies, and even some clergymen.

The fierce struggle between puritanism and tolerance continued in Canada, as it did in Britain and the United States, throughout the century — and on the many occasions when theatre was involved, the battle descended, appropriately enough, into farce or melodrama.

Mackenzie's own detached attitude to theatre which allowed him to mock its puritanical foes, changed to implacable enmity in 1828 when a sensational murder at York brought theatre into disrepute and ended all play-going in that town for the next five years.

Following a performance one evening by a visiting American company, Charles French, a former printer's apprentice to Mackenzie, fatally shot one Edward Nowlan, a labourer, who like French had attended the play. French believed that Nowlan had been hired to assault him by young men of the Tory clique, but whatever the provocation, he was convicted of murder and hanged.

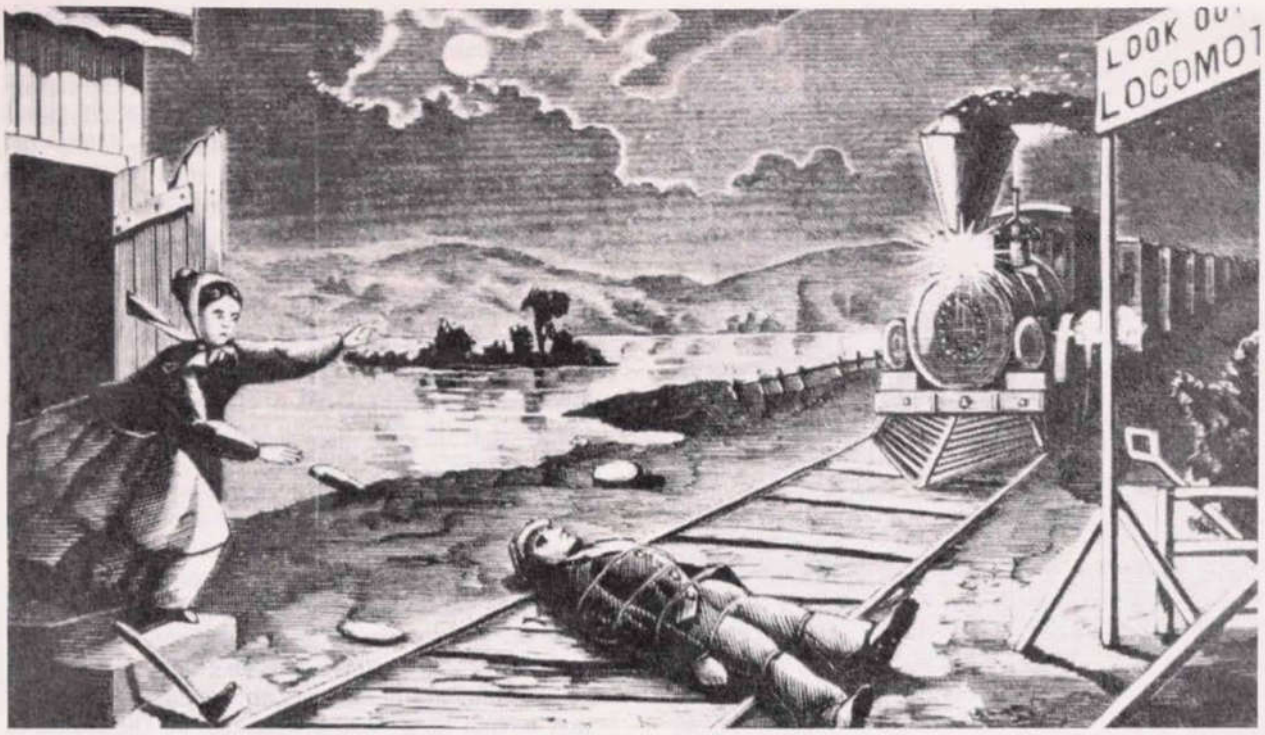
Mackenzie, who had fought in vain for a pardon, claimed that the theatre had enticed French to low tippling houses and bad companions, and he denounced the stage for introducing irregular habits among the town's youth and luring the hard-working tradesman from his peaceful home.

This utilitarian criticism fell far short of the passionate attacks launched by the truly puritanical enemies of the stage. In anglophone communities the most dedicated of these were Protestant clergymen, particularly the Methodists, many of whom were itinerant preachers whose religious zeal greatly exceeded their scholarship. A better-educated clergyman from another denomination scornfully dismissed them as "unlettered ranters".

Fortunately for the success of Methodism in pioneer days, impassioned preaching was in much greater demand than scholarship. Revivals, camp meetings and temperance crusades provided powerful emotional outlets for settlers condemned to an otherwise drab existence of unrelieved labour. And although these stirring occasions brought in great numbers of converts, Methodist leaders never relaxed their vigilance against a rival claimant for the hearts and minds of Upper Canadians. In November 1829, almost a year and a half after the last play seen in York, the *Christian Guardian*, a recently founded Methodist journal, feelingly demanded, "Who is there that loves his Saviour and the souls of men who will presume to countenance or vindicate the amusements of the theatre?"

Considering how rare and innocuous theatrical performances were in Upper Canada during the first four decades of the nineteenth century, the virulent campaign against them obviously sprang from something other than personal observation, and in fact the preachers who declared theatres to be destructive of all morals were usually at pains to deny that they themselves had ever set foot in such unhallowed places.

The source of these apparently gratuitous attacks was English Puritanism, in which clerical hostility to the stage was deeply rooted. All public theatres in



The famous railway track scene from "Under the Gaslight", described by some Victorian moralists as "the cause of a great deal of crime before the courts".

England had been officially closed during the Puritan ascendancy, 1642-1660, and when the monarchy was restored, theatre returned in what was, to many, a much more offensive form. Charles II and his followers brought back from their years of exile in France new standards and new practices, including the use of actresses in place of boys to take women's roles. Among these were Nell Gwyn, who became Charles's mistress, and other attractive women who combined the careers of comedienne and courtesan. Bawdy language, then common in fashionable circles, was introduced into the plays written for Restoration courtiers, and leading playwrights, such as William Congreve and John Dryden, habitually employed the themes of seduction and adultery.

All such threats to England's spiritual welfare were violently attacked in 1698 by a clergyman, Jeremy Collier, whose opening salvo, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage,* precipitated a flood of books and pamphlets both from clergymen and other moralists, and from the beleaguered playwrights.

As a result of this lively controversy, enmity to the theatre in any form became almost an article of faith with many Protestant ministers and communicants, especially, if not entirely, among the non-conformist denominations.

In North America, where at the beginning of the nineteenth century only a handful of the largest cities could boast a theatre building or an acting season of more than a few months each year, itinerant players with a repertoire of primitive melodramas and naive farces were castigated in terms composed for licentious performances at the court of Charles II a century and a half earlier.

Opponents of theatre in North America never rose to quite the same level of creative invective as their English models, but their certainty of moral superiority went far to compensate for an often crude style. The *Canada Christian Advocate,* a Methodist weekly published in Hamilton, declared in 1849 that the theatre was:

> Satan's synagogue. It is the constant resort of the most corrupt portions of society — the pick-pocket — the blackleg — the prostitute and the profane are there. . . . It is known that the morals of thousands have been ruined both for time and eternity by attending these haunts of vice.

Such anti-theatrical propaganda was highly successful at intimidating women who were far more vulnerable than men to censure if they patronized performances that seemed to condone any kind of sexual freedom.

The *Christian Guardian,* which defined a good wife as "strictly and conscientiously virtuous . . . submissive from choice and obedient from inclination," went so far in 1836 as to equate theatre-going by poor women

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STAGE MANAGER, ... MR. GEO. H. BARTON

BENEFIT
OF MR.
A. D. HOLMAN!

WEDNESDAY EVENING, APRIL 20th, 1870,
LAST REPRESENTATION THIS SEASON
Of the English adaption, in 3 acts, by Molyneaux St. John, Esq., of
OFFENBACH'S OPERA BOUFFE,
ENTITLED
ORPHEE AUX ENFERS!

EURYDICE, ... MISS SALLIE HOLMAN
CUPID, ... MISS JULIA HOLMAN
JOHN STYX, ... MR. A. D. HOLMAN

ORPHEUS ..... MR. CHARLES DREW
JUPITER ..... MR. W. H. CRANE
ARISTOEUS, afterwards PLUTO ..... MR. GEORGE H. BARTON
PUBLIC OPINION, afterwards APOLLO ..... MR. J. W. FELTON
MARS ..... MR. P. MELDON
MERCURY ..... MR. ALFRED HUDSON
MORPHEUS ..... MR. W. H. SMITH
NEPTUNE ..... MR. W. H. LYTELL
JUNO ..... MRS. LOTTIE PARKES
DIANA ..... MRS. ISABELLA ARNOLD
VENUS ..... MISS TILLY LYON
MINERVA ..... MISS BELLE SYDNEY
NEBE ..... MRS. ELLA SPACKMAN
FIRST DEMON ..... MR. J. BANKS
SECOND DEMON ..... MR. ARNOLD

SYNOPSIS OF THE SCENERY.

ACT 1—Scene 1.—A RURAL SCENE NEAR THEBES.

The Cottage of Orpheus and that of Aristoeus. A little tiff between Orpheus and Eurydice. Appearance of Aristoeus. Eurydice is stung on the heel by a Serpent, and dies. Exit to the Shades below with Pluto. Orpheus returns, calls on Apollo. Exit to demand aid of Jupiter.

ACT 2—Scene 1.— A SCENE IN THE SKY.

Orpheus and Public Opinion en route for Mount Olympus; joined by Cupid who misdirects them off. Exit. Scene 2.—OLYMPUS.—The Gods asleep. Arrival of Diana, Venus, Cupid and Pluto. Revolt of the Gods. Arrival of Orpheus. Put to the Shades in search of Eurydice.

ACT 3—Scene 1.—PLUTO'S BOUDOIR.

John Styx make love to Eurydice. Arrival of Jupiter and Pluto. Cupid sees Eurydice for the first time. Jupiter disguised as a fly. Descent of John Styx.
Scene 2.—GARDENS OF THE INFERNAL REGIONS.—THE RIVER STYX IN THE DISTANCE. The Banquet to Pluto's guests. Eurydice changed into a Bacchante. Arrival of Orpheus and Public Opinion. Jupiter's decree. Eurydice's release. Bacchus' Car. Demonstrations of joy.

MUSICAL MELANGE by the Band of the 10th Royals,
(BY KIND PERMISSION.)

DESCRIPTIVE SONG, Buffo Baritone - - MR. FRANK MELDON
COMIC DITTY - - - - - - MR. ALFRED HUDSON
SONG AND DANCE - - - - - - MR. JOE BANKS

TO CONCLUDE WITH THE LAUGHABLE FARCE OF
SIAMESE TWINS.

SIMON SLOW ..... MR. A. D. HOLMAN
DENNIS O'GLAD ..... MR. W. H. CRANE
MR. PORCUPINE ..... MR. ALFRED HUDSON
CAPT. VIVID ..... MR. W. H. LYTELL
MARIAN ..... MISS TILLY LYON
SALLY ..... MISS BELLE SYDNEY

THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 21,
"Lost at Sea."
SATURDAY AFTERNOON - - MATINEE
Monday, April 25th, - Benefit of MR. P. REDMOND, Machinist.
"CORSICAN BROTHERS" and farce of "CONSUMPTION CURED."
DOORS OPEN AT A QUARTER PAST SEVEN; CURTAIN RISES AT EIGHT O'CLOCK
Tickets Boxes, $4. Single Seats in Private Boxes, $1. Dress Circle, 50 Cents
Parquette and Gallery, 25 Cents.
GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

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with a descent into prostitution, quoting a "professor in New York", who had claimed that:

> In the case of the feebler sex, a relish for the amusements of the theatre without the means of indulgence becomes too often a motive for listening to the suggestions of the seducer, and thus prepares an unfortunate captive of sensuality for the haunts of infamy and of total destitution of all that is valuable in the mind and character of woman.

Since women could innocently compromise their reputations by being seen at entertainments branded questionable by some self-appointed censor, comparatively few of them dared to support even the most reputable performers during the early and mid-nineteenth century in British North America. For the majority of companies, who were desperately struggling to make a meagre living during recurrent periods of economic depression, the routine absence of so many potential patrons was a serious matter.

Performances that drew a good turnout of women were sufficiently rare to merit comment. In a favourable review of a one-man show in 1850 by an English actor, Charles Hill, the Whitby *Reporter* remarked that he had been "well appreciated by the ladies, to see as many of whom present must have been as pleasant to Mr. Hill as it was to us."

The presence of any women at all at a dramatic performance was, of course, far from pleasant to the *Christian Guardian*. Even in 1837, when there was very little theatrical activity to rival the current political excitement, this journal could lament: "It is amazing to think that women who pretend to decency and reputation . . . should continue to abet by their presence, so much unchastity as is to be found in a theatre."

Such hectoring techniques did not noticeably deter male theatre-lovers from their chosen pleasures. In Kingston, where a group of military amateurs had become active after the War of 1812, an early skirmish erupted between pro- and anti-theatre factions. Here, as in British garrisons elsewhere, officers beguiled some of their peacetime leisure with theatricals, and donated their box office receipts to local churches for charitable purposes.

Unfortunately, neither philanthropy nor a blameless choice of plays protected the Kingston amateurs from attack. In late 1829, when they edified audiences with works by Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott, certain clergymen — a Presbyterian, a Methodist, and an Anglican — expressed their total disapproval of the stage by refusing to accept donations from such an immoral source.

Offenbach's comic operas, denounced as "profane and criminal pleasures", were played with great success by the Holman Company in all the leading cities of Eastern Canada.

Incensed by this holier-than-thou attitude, the Roman Catholic Vicar-General in Kingston, who had earlier accepted money from the amateurs, denounced those who refused it as "ignorant, whining, gloomy hypocrites". The *Christian Guardian* thereupon seized the opportunity to point out, with great satisfaction, that two of the Vicar-General's own "infallible prelates" were among the "despicable horde" of gloomy hypocrites and that a Catholic bishop had pronounced the union of Christian charity and dramatic performances "a scandalous connection of the sacred with the profane".

The Kingston *Chronicle,* which had welcomed the amateur performances as "a desirable means of dispelling the monotonous gloom of our long winter evenings", met an attack by the *Religious Advocate,* another Methodist journal, with a counterblast:

> While we know that *some* men from *principle* oppose the stage, we are not ignorant that others make a merit of avoiding plays, balls and such public amusements, classing these as vices, with whom in worldly intercourse, we have discovered no such aversion to . . . lying, cheating, insolence and intolerance.

Readers of the *Chronicle* enthusiastically supported the amateurs in a series of letters signed with such belligerent noms de guerre as "Fair Play", "Anti-Humbug", and "Consistency", and finally the editor exercised his prerogative to have the last word by declaring that "most of the scribblers who attack us under the guise of religion are swayed much more by political enmity than religious zeal".

It was unlucky for the theatre that it should be involved, however peripherally and involuntarily, in the political struggle then raging in Upper Canada between Reformers and Tories. Nonconformist foes of frivolous amusements gravitated naturally to the cause of reform, whereas Tory members of the Anglican uppercrust enjoyed theatricals in private homes, and considered theatre-going a desirable cultural activity. Newspapers sympathetic to the Tory cause could usually be counted on to support the theatre, a stance which provided some of their Reformer rivals with yet another charge against them.

Guelph was the scene in 1847 of a powerful attack on a group of young men who proposed forming an amateur theatrical society. In immediate reaction to the announcement of this project, a series of letters eloquently denouncing it appeared in the *Guelph and Galt Advertiser.* Leading the onslaught, "A Young Man" stigmatized the would-be actors as "mountebanks and hypocrites", and fiercely demanded to know their names and the churches to which they were attached. Their plea of the absence of any other amusement inspired him to a breathtaking flight of rhetoric: "Amusement indeed! Beings rational, intellectual, deathless, redeemed, seeking amusement amid accumulations of folly, falsehood, puerility and mimicry!"

Toronto actor-manager John Nickinson gave the city its first real taste of professional theatre.

The week after this ringing call to arms, "A Friend to Young Men" displayed in his turn a lively talent for all-out disputation. He professed himself incredulous that in such a neighbourhood of churches as Guelph, any young men could be found

> of such vitiated taste, so regardless of their own respectability, so deaf to the voice of their Ministers . . . so insensible to the honour and feeling of their friends, so reckless of a future state, as to sacrifice themselves by the prostitution of their time and energies to those practices which contaminate Society and are excusable only on the part of maniacs and idiots.

In the next issue of the *Advertiser* the Friend to Young Men, evidently exhilarated by the spirited tone

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William Lyon Mackenzie witnessed the failure and triumph of an early theatrical company in the "ballroom" of this primitive York inn.

of the campaign, broke into print once more, this time in verse. The concluding lines of his poetic admonition to Guelph's aspiring actors may well have given them pause:

> Despise what would disgrace your sex,
> Consume your time, involve in debts,
> Plant in your dying bed the thorn,
> Extort the wish you'd ne'er been born,
> Expose your folly when too late,
> And seal your doom of hopeless fate.

Without appearing to oppose the sanctified principles of their local churches, amateurs themselves could scarcely fight back against the clergy who censured them, but many independent-minded editors rendered assistance, emphasizing the benefits of theatricals, and disparaging their critics.

There were certain worldly advantages for such editors, even if in the view of the pious they thereby exposed their immortal souls to the risk of eternal damnation. Their stand on the issue of theatre provided an agreeable opportunity to denounce rival journalists as hypocrites and bigots, while representing themselves as men of open minds and some cultivation, in tune with the civilized customs of the Mother Country. Not to be ignored, either, by small newspapers operating on a shoestring, was the income from printing playbills and inserting advertisements of performances.

The donation to good causes of any profits the amateurs earned was applauded by many newspapers, such as the Montreal *Gazette*, which termed "truly benevolent and patriotic" a benefit given in 1844 by French Canadian players for exiles of the 1837 Rebellion. A troupe of local thespians in Chatham, Canada West, devoted the proceeds of one performance to sufferers from a devastating fire in the neighbouring town of London, and of another to the farmer who produced the best cheese in the county.

Through most of the century, professional actors were generally held, even by theatre-goers, to be social pariahs. In 1840 the *Christian Guardian* clearly stated its opinion of all performers:

> The stage is a nursery of candidates for perdition. Spendthrifts and prodigals, men and women who have lacerated their parents' hearts, have frequently

jumped on to the stage, there to fill up their iniquities and perfect their baseness by teaching others to do the same.

To combat this unfortunate public image, well-disposed editors commonly stressed the respectability of theatrical companies. In 1843, a lean year, the Montreal *Gazette* urged better patronage of a company headed by John Nickinson, "a very respectable man and a man with a large family". The relative importance of respectability and acting talent was indicated by George Skerrett, an actor-manager who brought a company recruited in the States to Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton for several summer seasons in the 1840s. As an inducement to patronage, he declared that he selected only those actors "who will be as respected for their conduct in private life as for their efficiency in the performance of their public duties".

Ottawa, still a crude lumber town in 1866, evidently demanded higher standards from actors than from its own brawling residents, for the manager of Her Majesty's Theatre in that city, John Townsend, considered it advisable to announce that his "constant endeavor will be to establish it upon the most respectable and unexceptionable footing".

If respectability was the *sine qua non* of minor nineteenth-century entertainers, at least on Canadian soil, "moral" or "chaste" was the essential label for their offerings. Even those vulgar amusements, the circus and the minstrel show, laid claim to being one or the other. The Victory Arena and Great Western Circus, which visited the British Provinces in 1844, advertised its show as "moral, classical and highly amusing". In 1876 Haverly's Minstrels described themselves as "the Acme of Refined Minstrelsy, Everything Chaste, Bright and Elegant".

As for the drama, early nineteenth-century supporters believed they could serve it best by describing it as "a school for practical morality" or "a powerful moral engine", and throughout the century many plays were praised on the grounds that they were as good as a sermon.

At a time of cheap liquor and widespread alcoholism, temperance plays were comparatively easy to defend against clerical criticism. In 1867 Ottawa audiences were edified by performances of *Ten Nights in a Bar Room*, described by an admiring reviewer as "depicting the horrid vice of drunkenness in its most appalling form, and assisting the cause of temperance far more than the Press and Pulpit combined".

Some plays were marred by managers' excessive exploitation of their saintly qualities. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was certainly a great moral lesson in the 1850s, but as Emancipation reduced the impact of the slavery theme, many companies compensated by intensifying its sanctimonious aspects. A production of this sort, at

Lola Montez, courtesan and actress.

Toronto's Grand Opera House in 1877, drew a harsh rebuke from the *Canadian Monthly:*

> A good deal of the dialogue is of that peculiarly offensive description which, though intended for piety, is, to those who object to the vulgarizing of sacred things, simply cant and irreverence. The adapter has done his worst to degrade the heroic Tom to the level of a snivelling Chadband, and convert Eva into an infantile moral prig of the most objectionable kind.

A surprising play to receive, for a time at least, a clean bill of moral health, was *La Dame aux Camélias* (known as *Camille*), but only when bowdlerized and subtitled *The Fate of a Coquette*. In 1858 the Hamilton *Spectator* summarized the plot as a "thrilling and lifelike delineation of the life of a coquette, its joys, sorrows and hopes". The heroine in this version was depicted simply as an innocent flirt and such shocking terms as "harlot" or "courtesan" were never used.

A few weeks before Hamilton welcomed this whitewashed Lady of the Camellias, Toronto audiences had their eyes opened to her real character by Matilda Heron, an actress who had recently taken New York by storm with a less expurgated translation from the original French. Because of what one local paper delicately called "the unsuitableness of *Camille* to the prevailing taste of the city", Torontonians allowed the electrifying Miss Heron to play to half-empty benches,

Lillie Langtry, whose reputation as a former mistress of the Prince of Wales drew crowds of respectable Canadians to the theatres where she played.

thereby smugly depriving themselves of a legendary theatrical experience.

Although colonial Britons at mid-century could still be cowed by puritanical conventions to the point of rejecting a fictional character of easy virtue, they were not to be kept on the leash when a famous real-life adulteress appeared at a local theatre. In 1857 Lola Montez, who a decade earlier had been the most notorious woman in Europe, drew packed houses at Toronto's Royal Lyceum. All but the most irredeemably strait-laced were agog to see the woman who had fascinated such men as Franz Liszt and King Ludwig I of Bavaria, the king whose infatuation with her had cost him his throne. Her box office appeal could not be explained away as a cultivated interest in the drama, for Lola had scarcely more than amateur acting skills, and the main work in which she appeared, *Lola Montez in Bavaria,* was a boring vehicle hack-written to exploit her lurid past.

The next royal mistress to arrive on a Canadian stage was Lillie Langtry, whose liaison with the Prince of Wales, later to become Edward VII, was common knowledge. In 1883 she was booked for three nights at Toronto's Grand Opera House, where all seats for the engagement were sold days before her arrival. In that most British city, disapproval of her moral character was evidently outweighed by a loyal interest in the taste of Britain's future king.

The scarlet woman who drew the heaviest clerical fire when she dared to perform in Canada was Sarah Bernhardt, currently the world's most distinguished actress, and incidentally an impenitent unwed mother. In Montreal and Quebec she was damned by the Catholic hierarchy, and in anglophone cities members of the Protestant clergy united in condemning any patronage of an actress of such loose morals.

The Catholic Church in French Canada had been traditionally opposed to theatre since the early days of New France, when the mere idea of a production of Molière's *Tartuffe* in 1694 had roused to fury the Bishop of Quebec. Although Tartuffe was not himself a priest, the hypocritical piety he displayed while attempting to seduce his benefactor's wife seemed to many to be a disguised attack on the clergy. Plays that took such a pernicious attitude to the Church, as well as portraying a variety of other crimes, must certainly be banned.

Compounding the already deplorable sins of the stage, an actress who had besmirched the purity of marriage and family could only expect total annihilation by the Church. Denunciations of Madame Bernhardt by the Archbishops of Montreal and Quebec were, however, in vain. Their best efforts to keep the faithful from the box office were defeated by popular curiosity to see such a famous actress, and pride in her as the embodiment of French culture.

On her first Canadian visit, in December 1880, a packed house greeted her opening performance in Montreal, and after the last act she was presented with a magnificent floral arrangement carrying the French tricolor, which she removed and waved aloft, to a wild burst of cheers. The Marseillaise was played then and on many later occasions, when she provided a focus for passionate French sentiment.

Conflict between the actress and the Catholic Church in Quebec came to a head during her 1905 engagement. In spite of an episcopal letter from Montreal's Archbishop Bruchesi forbidding the faithful to patronize Bernhardt's performances, she nightly filled the largest theatre in the city, with an average attendance of 2,550.

In Quebec City, where Bernhardt played for a few nights following her triumph in Montreal, a crisis was precipitated by an interview with her in a French-Canadian paper, *L'Événement*. There she was quoted as saying that Canadians had a beautiful country but no men of talent in the arts, and as for French Cana-

da's debt to its devoted clergy, conceded only that it owed to them a backwardness that had put the country on a level with Turkey.

This inflammatory report stirred a crowd of young men to defend the cause of Church and morality by attacking members of Bernhardt's company with rotten eggs, stones and loaded canes as they were leaving the city. Bernhardt, who was herself unharmed, blamed the attack on students from the Laval seminary, and although Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier sent the actress a letter of apology, Quebec City authorities made no arrests.

Apart from the scandal of her private life, Bernhardt was condemned for the works in which she appeared, French plays being considered at best improper, and at worst downright depraved. The *Bystander*, a Canadian monthly, described the repertoire of her 1880-81 visit as:

> of that Parisian class which cleanly-minded English people cannot thoroughly appreciate. . . . For our own part, we hold that the pure and regular union of the sexes is the mainstay of our happiness as well as of our virtue; that without it life would be wretched as well as filthy and vile, and that everything said to the contrary in French novels or other depositories of elegant pruriency is nonsense as well as vicious.

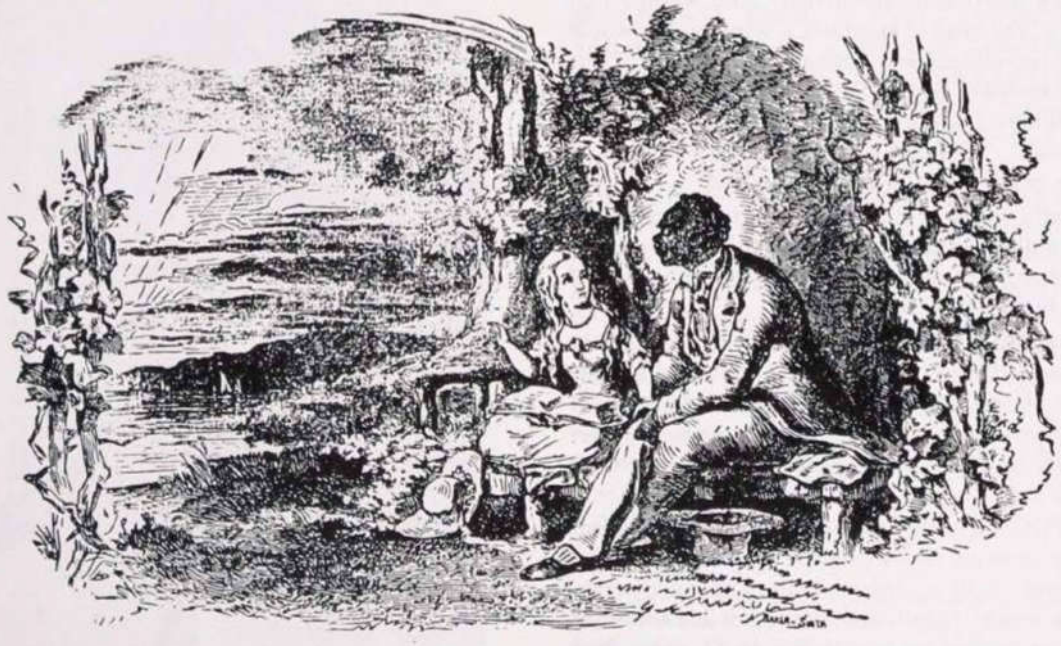
French musical comedy, delightfully tuneful and amusing as it was in the late nineteenth-century heyday of Offenbach, Lecocq and Audran, drew particular fire. In 1868, Montreal's Bishop Bourget intemperately equated the arrival of a French company performing Offenbach's *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein* and *La Belle Hélène* with such catastrophes as an outbreak of cholera or an earthquake. To give oneself up to these profane and criminal pleasures, he declared, was to renounce the happiness promised by Jesus Christ to his true servants.

The tremendous popularity of *opéra bouffe* in anglophone Canada was seriously displeasing to the more austere English-language journals. The *Bystander* was roused to such fury as to recommend that every performer in *opéra bouffe* be "dragged through a horsepond, where he would meet nothing so filthy as himself".

Individual performers from France could expect caustic references to their country's supposed offences against propriety and morality. In 1894 Yvette Guilbert, the celebrated *diseuse*, attempted to placate Toronto critics by omitting the risque songs for which she was most famous, but drew only a captious complaint from the *Star* about her "emasculated program to suit the prudish morals of such as could follow her French". Two years later the same newspaper reported that the shapely French star, Vernona Jarbeau, gave one of her songs while arrayed in pale blue tights with a mantle of gauze, and "relied on her nationality as an excuse".

However vocal the puritanical element in Canada, the cause of French drama was saved here by the supporters of "jollity, mirth and frivolity", who persisted in enjoying the effervescent humour of Gallic farces and comedies. The high-minded *Canadian Monthly* began an 1877 review of *Forbidden Fruit* by

Little Eva reading the Bible to Uncle Tom, from "Uncle Tom's Cabin".



Harvard Theatre Library

The Divine Sarah Bernhardt, in repose.

describing its leading character as a vulgar trapeze performer (female) "of free-and-easy manners and morals, who exercised the wiles of the demi-monde on every man married or unmarried", and warned that it was not "the kind of spectacle a wise mother would select for the edification of unmarried daughters". This said, the reviewer had to admit that "the dialogue is so exceedingly sparkling and witty, the situations are so ludicrous . . . that the objectionable features are, to a certain extent, kept in the background".

Ironically, many of the most respected dramas performed in nineteenth-century Canada were French in origin, although commonly ascribed to writers who had adapted them for the London stage.

The Toronto reviewer who in 1852 wrote of *Nan the Good-for-Nothing* (a play much favoured by leading actresses of the time) that "a dozen sermons might fail to do half the good to the heart" gave no evidence of knowing that it had begun its uplifting career in France.

The Ticket-of-Leave Man, a French melodrama generally credited to its English adapter, playwright Tom Taylor, dealt sympathetically with an innocent man who is sent to jail, and later finds his record an obstacle to leading an honest life. In St. John, New Brunswick, publicity for its 1876 production urged that "Everybody should see this **Great Moral Play**".

Although Canadian audiences gradually lost their inhibitions about laughing at risque situations on the stage, disapproval of anything labelled "French" was not easily purged from puritanical Canadian souls. As late as 1959, when an amateur group from a small town won top honours in the Central Ontario Drama League with Marcel Aymé's acclaimed satirical comedy, *Clérambard,* Toronto's *Globe and Mail* reported that the decision to produce it had been made by the director over the actors' misgivings that it was too French, too frank, for their town.

Apart from such fossilized prejudices, the influence of self-appointed arbiters of manners and morals was shrinking fast by the end of the nineteenth century as the movement of Canadians from family farms into the burgeoning cities accelerated. A growing urban proletariat sought relief in big new theatres from the tedium of long hours in office, shop or factory, without that fear of rebuke from their pastors that could still keep rural folk in line.

Many clergymen did continue on the attack, but their blanket condemnation of theatres as "schools of profanity and vice", "scenes of obscenity and irreligion", or "breathing holes of hell" no longer carried much weight with parishioners who had enjoyed many

Yvette Guilbert "Sur le Scène", 1898, by Henri de Toulouse Lautrec.

a happy and innocent evening in the Opera Houses or Academies of Music that flourished across the country at the turn of the century.

As a rearguard action, the forces of puritanism began to concentrate their efforts on censoring specific dramatic scenes, dances, and posters. A sensational play, *Ladies of the Evening,* was "dry-cleaned" in Toronto by shifting the hero's interview with one of the ladies from her bedroom to the vicinity of a lamp-post, where he could hear her deplorable life story in the wholesome open air.

Various dances, including the *can-can* and *coucha-coucha,* performed by touring companies from the States, drew puritanical frowns, and the Salome and apache dances were for a time banned outright in Toronto. In 1909 the Salome dance was allowed back on the city's stages when it was sanitized by being retitled "A Vision of Light" and having its main prop, a papier mache head of John the Baptist, replaced by a sofa cushion.

Some nineteenth-century theatre managers attempted to establish a high moral tone.

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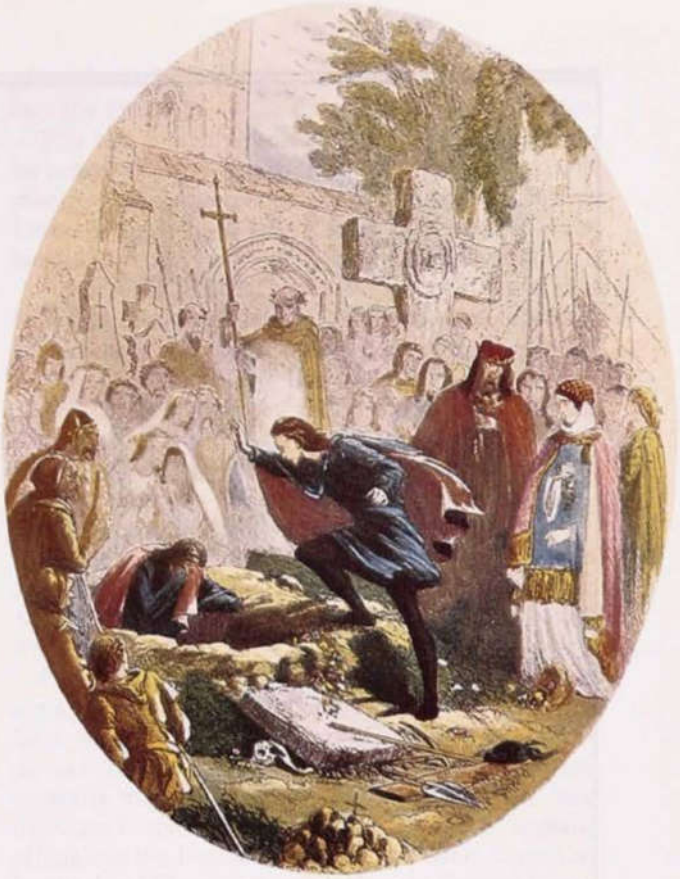


Even Shakespeare was considered dangerous by some Victorians. This nineteenth-century illustration depicts the grave scene in Hamlet.

For a time, posters on city fences became the targets of repressive action. Pistols and wine bottles had to be painted out of exciting scenes of violence or carousal, and pants painted on titillating illustrations of chorus girls. In 1894, Toronto authorities charged a theatre manager and his bill-poster with corrupting public morals through the pictures they exposed to view, one official declaring as a fact that representations of men tied to railway tracks or in front of rip-saws caused a great deal of the crime before the courts.

By the 1930s, this often petty harassment had largely subsided. Canadian puritanism had by no means disappeared, but theatre, almost entirely routed by the great new mass entertainment, talking pictures, was no longer a believable threat to the country's morals.

Champions of Canadian virtue scarcely missed the theatre as a target for their righteous anger when it was succeeded by such colourful culprits as movies, comic books, and TV. Eclipsed by these cheaper and far more accessible media, the live stage could celebrate its freedom from savage attacks with unlimited indulgence in jollity, mirth and frivolity. ◆

Mary Shortt has published articles on various aspects of theatricals in nineteenth-century Canada, and is now working on a history of early Toronto theatre.

FREE TRADE 1854

By Randall White

On a warm spring night very early in June 1854, James Bruce — Eighth Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, Governor of the United Province of Canada, "Governor General in and over all Her Britannic Majesty's Provinces on the Continent of North America", and publicly known simply as "Lord Elgin" — went out for a walk on the streets of Washington, D.C.

He was accompanied by Francis Hincks, co-premier of the United Province of Canada, E.B. Chandler, premier of the Province of New Brunswick, several members of the Senate of the United States of America, and one Lawrence Oliphant: a young man of high spirits and higher education, who was serving as Elgin's private secretary.

Oliphant was in the early stages of an intriguingly varied career as a nineteenth-century British diplomat, world traveller, journalist, mystic, and author, and he has left us a brief account of the evening.

Lord Elgin had only been in Washington for a week or so. Yet his "faculty of brilliant repartee and racy anecdote" had "especially delighted" a select group of Southern Democratic senators, who "often exhibited traits of Western manners unhampered by conventional trammels". On this warm night very early in June, "after a grand dinner", the racy and brilliant Eighth Earl "was persuaded to accompany a group of senators . . . to the house of a popular and very influential politician, there to prolong the entertainment into the small hours". Oliphant carries on:

> Our host, at whose door we knocked at midnight, was in bed, but much thundering at length aroused him, and he himself opened to us appearing in nothing but a very short nightshirt.

"All right boys", he said, at once divining the object of our visit; "You go in and I'll go down and get the drink", and without stopping to array himself more completely, he disappeared into the nether regions, shortly returning with his arms filled with bottles of champagne, on the top of which were two large lumps of ice.

Only a few days later, "during the last five minutes of the 5th of June and the first five minutes of the 6th", Lord Elgin, in another part of Washington, was sitting across the table from William L. Marcy, Secretary of State of the United States of America. The two men were putting the finishing touches on the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, which provided for free trade in resource products between the United States and the provinces of British North America: Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland.

Subsequently ratified and implemented by all concerned, the treaty would last for a dozen years. It can reasonably be said to be the first free trade agreement between present-day Canada and the United States. According to Oliphant, its opponents in Washington jibed that "it had been floated through on champagne". In his exuberant way, Oliphant himself judged: "Without altogether admitting this, there can be no doubt that in the hands of a skilful diplomatist, that beverage is not without its value".

Allowing for Oliphant's worldly wisdom, when Elgin and Marcy signed the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 in the small hours of 6 June they were also concluding a political process that had formally begun in London, England, some eight years before. Elgin's negotiating skills only consummated a particular deal that had been percolating since the late 1840s, and had actually been put into draft form in the summer of 1853.

Moreover, at the bottom of the deal was a seminal event in the history of both British politics and international economic development.

From the middle of the seventeenth century down to the middle of the nineteenth century, the commerce of the British Empire had been run on nationalist or "mercantilist" principles. By the early 1840s the principles had spawned a complicated system of protected global trade, managed and manipulated by the government of the United Kingdom.

In 1846, however, the Conservative ministry of Robert Peel had begun a revolutionary process of dismantling this ancient commercial regime in favour of a bold, new policy of imperial "free trade". Under the new regime the government of the United Kingdom would take a back seat to the creative international market forces of an expanding world economy. To start things off, on 26 May 1846 the Mother of Parliaments repealed the Corn Laws, which had imposed a high protective tariff or government duty on grain imported into the heartland of the Empire in the British Isles.

This was a highly radical step. It split Peel's Conservative ministry apart. His bold new policy was inherited by a new ministry of Whigs or early British Liberals, under Lord John Russell (grandfather of the twentieth-century philosopher, Bertrand Russell).

Nonetheless, Russell continued the good works that Peel had begun. Under the Whigs the revolutionary movement to free trade climaxed with the abolition of the imperial Navigation Laws in 1849.

These bold actions by the managers of what was still, in the 1840s, "the greatest empire since Rome" had inevitable repercussions on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean — which ultimately led to the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854.

On the one hand, Britain's turn to free trade brought a political boon to the inhabitants of Her Britannic Majesty's Provinces on the Continent of North America.

For a generation rising forces of reform had been struggling to achieve democratic self-government in at least British North American domestic affairs. The dismantling of the protected mercantilist trade system, centrally managed from London, removed the final objection to colonial democracy on the part of imperial officials in the United Kingdom. In modern Canadian history Lord Elgin is, above all else, the Governor General who conceded what was known at the time as

Richard Cobden, "the apostle of free trade", leads a reluctant Robert Peel toward trade reform in this 1845 cartoon from "Punch".

Papa Cobden: "Come alone, Master Robert, do step out."
Master Robert: "That's all very well, but you know I cannot go as fast as you do."

National Gallery of Canada

Montreal's waterfront and Bonsecours Market in the 1850s, as depicted by William Raphael.

"responsible government", to the elected representatives of the British Crown's French-speaking and English-speaking North American subjects.

On the other hand, the imperial movement to free trade had less happy implications for British North American economic life — particularly in the United Province of Canada: roughly, modern Ontario and Quebec, and the most populous of Her Britannic Majesty's remaining possessions in the New World.

By the early 1840s the English-speaking merchants of Montreal (with an outpost in Quebec City and at least a few friends among the rising, upstart merchants of Toronto) had begun to turn the old resource economy of the French and Indian fur trade in Canada into a new resource economy of wheat and lumber. Like the old resource economy, the new one was based on an east-west transportation system and markets in Europe, made attractive through the government regulations of a protected imperial trading system.

British free trade compromised the logic of the new Canadian resource economy in several ways. Among the most important, it did away with the preferential duties or tariffs on colonial products, that allowed the Canadian Great Lakes-St. Lawrence canal system to compete in British markets with more southerly U.S. canal systems, not subject to freezing over in the winter. An exceptionally generous Canadian wheat and flour preference, that had only been granted in 1843, was a particular case in point.

The most obvious remedy for Canada was to expand into more economical markets, located close at hand in the rapidly growing American republic. Yet the immediate prospects for such expansion were thwarted by high American tariffs on both manufactured and resource products.

In the 1840s the United States was just beginning to compete economically with its former mother country in the United Kingdom. (The modern English historian A.J.P. Taylor has even argued that: "Culturally and economically the United States remained a British dependency until the beginning of the 20th century".) Though there was some moderation in American tariffs during the early era of British free trade, the youthful, rising colossus of the New World was not about to undertake any bold experiments itself. Fundamentally it opted for a neo-mercantilist policy of trade protection, earlier christened the "American System" by the perennial Washington politician, Henry Clay.

Thus Peel's plans for the repeal of the Corn Laws had become known in the United Province of Canada as early as February 1846. And on 12 May, a full two weeks before the actual repeal in the Parliament of the United Kingdom, the Assembly of the United

Province (as phrased by the early twentieth-century American historian, Charles Tansill) "agreed to an address to the Queen in which Her Majesty was requested to begin negotiations for reciprocal arrangements between Canada and the United States".

Under such arrangements, Canada would repeal her tariffs on specified products with respect to the United States, in return for a reciprocal repeal of American tariffs on the same products with respect to Canada.

A few U.S. politicians actively supported free trade with the republic's northern colonial neighbours, but most were profoundly indifferent, and substantial numbers actively opposed the concept. Efforts to achieve Canadian-American reciprocity through reciprocal legislation in the late 1840s foundered on antagonism in the American Senate.

In 1849 a new French and English reform alliance in the United Province of Canada, born out of Lord Elgin's concession of colonial self-government, successfully urged British imperial initiatives to negotiate a formal reciprocity treaty. But these were also thwarted by the U.S. Senate's treaty ratification power.

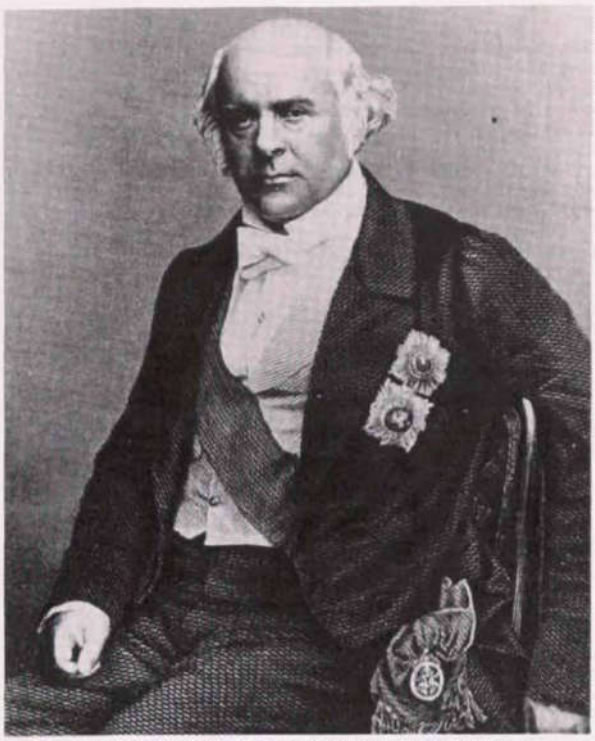
Something more was needed to win free trade in resource products with the United States. It ultimately arose to the east of the old United Canada — in the smaller and less populous British Atlantic Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland.

Here the advent of free trade in the mother country had also prompted concern. Yet the Atlantic resource economy still had more to do with fish and mining than with wheat and lumber. By the late 1840s a dispute over American fishing rights in British North American waters — flowing from a controversial agreement of 1818 — had begun to blend in fortuitous ways with the struggle for new trade arrangements between British North America and the United States.

By the early 1850s pressures to resolve the fishing dispute were becoming increasingly urgent for Washington politicians. The pressures reached a high point in 1852, when 13 ships of the Royal Navy (including a 74-gun frigate, and accompanied by vessels from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and the United Province of Canada), arrived to protect the fishing rights of British North American subjects in their own colonial waters.

Some strains of U.S. opinion viewed the arrival of the imperial fleet as a vain attempt to force the United States to grant free trade in resource products to "the British provinces", and vowed the attempt would fail. American ships were sent to the coasts of what is now Atlantic Canada, pledged to protect what the republic regarded as the rights of U.S. citizens to fish in international waters.

Despite this bravado, in the summer of 1853 U.S. Secretary of State Marcy, in consultation with the



Ontario Archives

James Bruce, the lively and brilliant Earl of Elgin.

British ambassador at Washington, drafted what the French diplomatic language of the day termed a "Projet of Treaty". It provided for free trade in a not altogether comprehensive list of resource products, the rights of U.S. citizens to fish in British North American waters (and, more or less, vice-versa), and the rights of U.S. citizens to the use of the Canadian Great Lakes-St. Lawrence canal system.

Marcy's project served as the basis for the actual treaty that he and Elgin finally signed in the small hours of 6 June 1854, but it was revised and edited in some notable respects.

The project, for example, had specified the rights of U.S. citizens to fish in the Pacific as well as the Atlantic waters of British North America. British imperial negotiators vetoed the extension of rights to the Pacific coast, on the grounds that this would interfere with rights recently granted by the Crown to the Hudson's Bay Company, which then presided over the vast region now known as Western Canada (where, in the 1850s, the "polyethnic" romance of the Canadian fur trade was still in its last wild bloom).

Marcy's project of treaty had also left coal off the so-called "free list" of resource products, in deference to Pennsylvania and Virginia interests which feared competition from Nova Scotia coal. Yet Nova Scotia was not at all happy about giving up its fishing monopoly in its coastal waters. British imperial negotiators, especially sensitive to colonial opinion in the new era

No. 1.	*W. H. Needham*, Fredericton, 1st May, 1854. For £210 paid to him for certain purposes of a government and legislative character	$ 840.00
2.	*M. H. Perley*, St. Johns, May 13, 1854. For expenses of telegraphic messages sent by Mr. A.	51.00
3.	*E. G. Fuller*, Halifax, April 22, 1854. For this amount expended by him (and for which he furnished Mr. Andrews with a receipt), on subjects affecting the interests of the U. States in this Colony, which were disbursed in a private manner for the following purposes.	
	To the Sun and other papers for publishing editorial articles.	
	To contributors for preparing articles.	
	To secret agents for special services.	
	For postages and telegraphic messages.	
	Presents to various parties, coach hire, dinner parties, etc.	
	To persons in public departments, expedition money, etc.	
	To active persons in Country districts.	
	To influential persons in Fishing Districts.	
	Procuring early information from public departments.	
	Contribution to Election Expenses for Gov't Candidate, etc.	3,900.00
4.	*George Coggswell*, St. Johns, Dec. 21, 1853. For traveling to Halifax and back, 560 miles, on government business of private character	165.40
5.	*J. P. Keefee*, Montreal, Dec. 3, 1853. For services and expenses of a journey to Quebec to see the Hon. M. Ross, the Attorney General of Canada, and Mr. Taché, Commissioner of Public Works, to take certain steps in relation to the Fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and in Nova Scotia	313.20
6.	*George N. Hill*, Halifax, Apr. 18, 1854. For services at Nova Scotia about fisheries	247.00
7.	*Wm. Mackay*, St. Johns, May 10, 1854. On account of services and to be expended	314.00
8.	*William Noble*, Halifax, Apr. 21, 1854. Expenses of special messengers to Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland with despatches	349.00
9.	*Robinson & Thompson*, St. John, May 18, 1854. For sundries	206.80
10.	National Hotel, Washington. Board and Parlor ..	1,282.75
		$7,669.15

One of several expense accounts submitted by U.S. special agent Israel Andrews to his superiors in Washington.

of self-government, understood the importance of giving something new to Nova Scotia, in compensation for what it was losing. In the treaty that Elgin and Marcy signed in June 1854 coal was included on the free list.

Finally, Washington was concerned enough about at last resolving the fishing dispute to send a special agent, Israel Andrews, to drum up support for the treaty in the British Atlantic provinces. Among other intriguing items, Andrews' still extant expense accounts include claims for payments "To influential persons in Fishing Districts".

There was another element in Lord Elgin's successful negotiation of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 that was at least as important as the dexterity with which he could handle bottles of champagne: and perhaps almost as important as concessions to the U.S. on Atlantic fishing rights.

To start with, in 1849, when economic difficulties prompted by international adjustments to British free trade were at their height, a group in the United Province of Canada, centred on old Montreal British Tory merchants also terminally irritated by the triumph of responsible government and colonial democracy, drew up a manifesto for annexation to the United States. Only in this way, it was argued, could the Canadian economic problems brought on by British free trade be permanently resolved.

Yet Lord Elgin and the elected French and English reform government of the United Province, for which he served as a kind of colonial constitutional monarch, saw a reciprocity or free trade treaty with the United States as an alternative to annexation. Like many among his colonial ministers (but unlike most other British imperial officials of the day), Elgin believed that there was a future for a new kind of French and English democratic political sovereignty in the most northern part of North America.

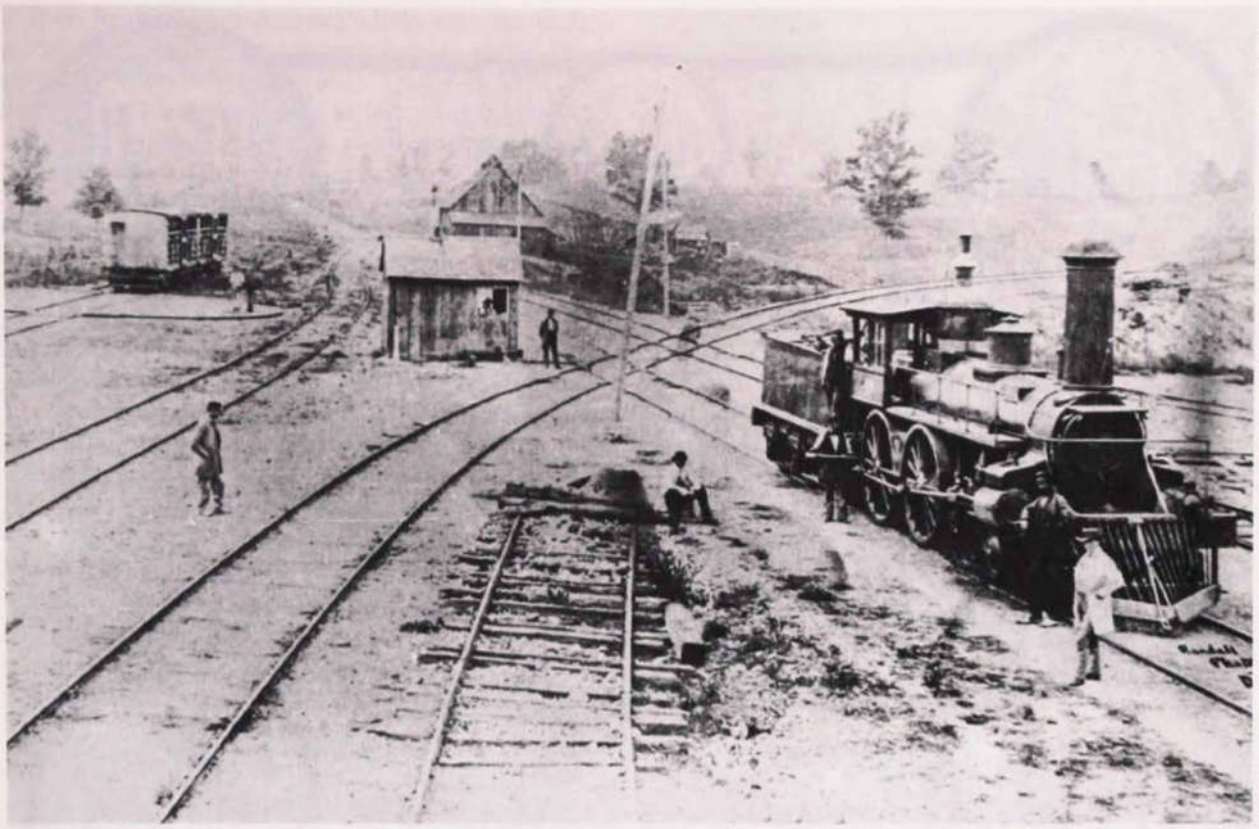
At the same time, just as Canada in the 1850s was not the Canada we know today, the mid-nineteenth century American republic was different from the U.S.A. of the late twentieth century. The independent Republic of Texas had only become the twenty-eighth state of the Union in 1845. One difficulty of reciprocity discussions in the late 1840s was U.S. preoccupation with Mexican struggles that brought California and much of the modern American Southwest into the Union.

Above all else, by the 1850s the great north-south sectional conflict over slavery was shaking the very foundations of the American experiment forged in the late eighteenth century. In the middle of the decade the U.S. journalist Horace Greeley told the old Upper Canadian radical reformer, William Lyon Mackenzie:

> You know that I am an annexationist. The time is coming when those states that persist in deifying slavery will secede from the Union and I am for letting them go peacefully... Then I would like to form a union with Canada and have a Great Free Republic, the strongest and truest in the world.

Without necessarily sharing Horace Greeley's particular views about the American South, many northern U.S. politicians of the 1850s also believed in the eventual annexation of the British North American provinces. Their reluctance to endorse reciprocity flowed from their conviction that if the provinces wanted to share in the economic advantages of the American Union, they should simply join it — as Benjamin Franklin had urged at the time of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and as had in fact been provided for in the original U.S. Articles of Confederation.

For most politicians from the American South itself, however, the annexation of the northern British provinces (where slavery had already been abolished) could only upset the delicate balance between free and slave states of the Union, in the wrong direction. So it was that Lord Elgin's champagne diplomacy in the late



Ontario Archives

The "Paris Junction" (near Hamilton) of the Great Western Railway, Canada West 1860. The Great Western linked Toronto, Hamilton and London with the border cities of Niagara Falls, Windsor and Sarnia.

spring of 1854 focused on Southern Democratic senators. In the end he convinced enough of them that a reciprocity treaty was the best way of keeping the free British provinces of the far North out of the Union, and this finally pushed free trade between Canada and the United States through the U.S. Senate.

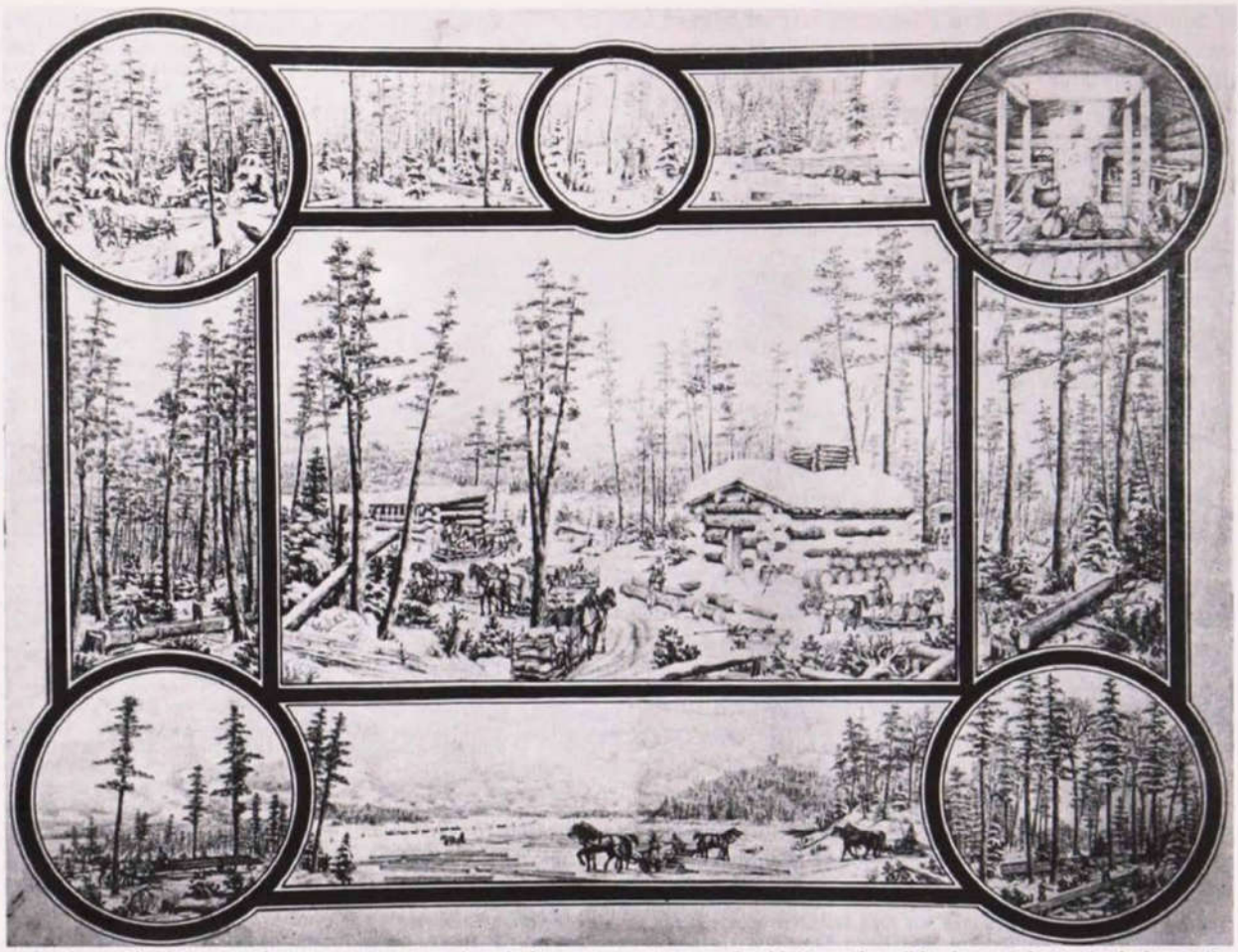
The Reciprocity Treaty began to take effect in 1855. Yet in some respects it was more a mechanism to manage and facilitate trends that had already set down roots than a device which suddenly created new trends in British North American trade.

Well before the treaty was negotiated, for instance, lumber from the United Province of Canada had begun to find new markets in the United States — in the wake of the United Kingdom's movement to free trade in the late 1840s (and of increasing demand in the rapidly growing northeastern cities of the republic). In 1840 some 2 million feet of Canadian lumber had been imported at the U.S. port of Oswego on Lake Ontario. The figure had risen to 6 million feet by 1846, 44 million feet by 1849, and 60 million feet by 1850.

Similarly, the 12-year period during which the treaty remained in effect coincided with some extraordinary events that make its real impact difficult to judge. These included: the Crimean War (1854-1856), which dramatically increased demand in Europe for both American and British North American products; the international financial panic of 1857, which followed the Crimean War; and the American Civil War (1861-1865), which dramatically increased demand for British North American products in the northern United States.

All this having been said, the statistics of the reciprocity period are impressive. In 1854, the year before the treaty took effect, the annual value of two-way trade between the United States and the British North American provinces amounted to somewhat less than $33 million (U.S.). By 1866, the last year of the treaty's operation, it had risen to more than $73 million. The Canadian historian Donald Masters has stressed that a great "part of the exports from one country to the other" was in fact "destined eventually for Europe, and particularly for Great Britain". Yet "there was also a considerable increase in the products of each country consumed in the other".

Canadian and especially American canals were key conduits on which the exports from one country to the other eventually made their way both to Europe and to various parts of the North American continent. The Reciprocity era of the 1850s and 1860s coincided as



Ontario Archives

This drawing by the nineteenth-century artist A.M. Edmonds depicts various stages in the old "squared pine" lumbering industry. By the late 1840s the needs of rapidly growing cities in the northeastern United States were stimulating a new "plank lumber" branch of the industry.

well with the first burst of the railway age in British North America. Between 1853 and 1866 New Brunswick constructed 218 miles of railroad and Nova Scotia 147. Between 1850 and 1860 railway mileage in the United Province of Canada increased from 55 to 1,871.

Especially in the western section of the United Province — now known as Ontario, but then known as Canada West or Upper Canada or even "Western Canada" — much of the new railway mileage connected with railroads in the United States. And the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 with the United States helped the rising, upstart merchants of Toronto get out from under the shadow of their more senior rivals in Montreal, who had traditionally stood on guard over Canada's gateway to the markets of the United Kingdom.

A strategic portion of the new Canadian railway mileage, however, linked Toronto and Montreal. Francis Hincks, Canada West co-premier of the United Province and a leader in the struggle for the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, was also an ardent early proponent of an Intercolonial Railway, that would eventually link modern Central Canada and modern Atlantic Canada.

The struggle for free trade with the United States ultimately led to free trade among the British North American provinces themselves — a milestone on the road to the wider Confederation of 1867. In 1857 the United Province of Canada dispatched a mission of exploration and discovery into the vast western territories of the Hudson's Bay Company, signalling a new era in the last great refuge of the historic Canadian wilderness romance (where Lord Selkirk had prompted the earliest raw beginnings of pioneer settlement more than a generation before).

The north-south urgings of free trade in resource products with the United States, in other words, did not overwhelm the parallel development of the east-west transcontinental axis, whose rugged geography of lakes, forests, mountains, plains, and rivers had inspired the ancient far northern fur trade, and would soon enough inspire the modern Canadian Confederation.

Even British North America's links with the early global village of imperial Europe did not suffer dramatically under the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 — despite the British movement to free trade in the late 1840s. As Masters has noted, in all provinces except New Brunswick "the trade of the colonies with Great Britain bore up remarkably well during the period of the treaty". In Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the United Province of Canada "the trade with the United Kingdom was considerably greater in 1865 than it had been in 1854".

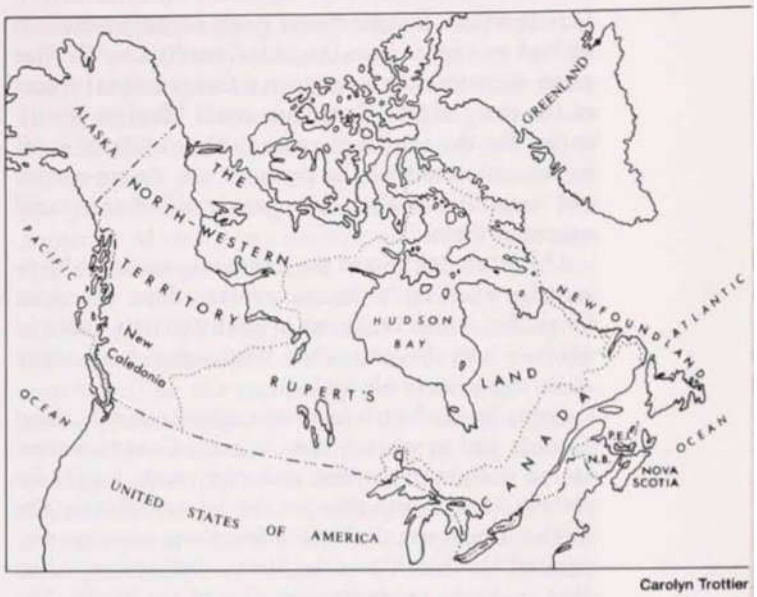
In another part of the global village with perhaps more profound economic significance for Canada today, 1854 was not just the year when a reciprocity agreement was at last successfully concluded between the early beginnings of modern Canada and the United States. It was also the year when Commodore Perry and the U.S. Navy negotiated the Treaty of Kanagawa, which brought the first irresistible breezes of the modern world economy to the exotic shores of Japan and the "Pacific Rim".

The international financial panic of 1857 took some wind out of economic life in all parts of North America. Even so, in the British North American provinces (especially in old United Canada, and especially in Canada West) the 1850s were a great boom period, and the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 continued to enjoy wide support.

In the United States, on the other hand, support for the treaty had begun to wane by the late 1850s. By the 1860s the agreement of 1854 had become distinctly unpopular. It had been set to run for 10 years, after which it could be abrogated or cancelled by either party on one year's notice. In 1865 Washington gave notice, and 1866 became the treaty's final year of operation.

From one modern Canadian standpoint, the U.S. abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 is not altogether easy to understand. By its own calculations, during the 12-year period of the treaty's operation the United States exported more than $305 million (U.S.) worth of goods to the British North American provinces, while the provinces exported only some $287 million worth of goods to the United States — giving the republic a positive trade balance of some $18 million.

Relatively, however, the provinces did much better than they had done before the treaty went into effect. During the five-year period from 1850 to 1854 the United States had exported just over $68 million worth of goods to the provinces, while the provinces had exported only somewhat more than $31 million worth of goods to the United States — giving the republic a positive trade balance of some $37 million. Viewed from this angle, the provinces had gained more from the treaty than the republic.



Carolyn Trottier

Colonies and Territories of British North America in the mid-nineteenth century

Moreover, the U.S. definition of what "reciprocity" ought to mean, it became clear, was different from the British North American definition. In the provinces it simply meant the reciprocal removal of tariffs on the resource products specified in the free list of the treaty. To American critics of the 1860s it came to mean that the provinces would, implicitly, look favourably on the manufactured products in which the U.S. had a strategic advantage, reciprocating special American treatment of the resource products in which the far North had an advantage.

In fact, manufactured products were not included in the treaty that Elgin and Marcy signed in 1854. Yet the United Province of Canada had reduced its tariffs on U.S. manufactured goods before the treaty was negotiated, as a unilateral gesture of goodwill. And the American historian Chalfant Robinson would later argue: "The provision that Canada was to buy our manufactures as we bought her natural products, rested upon a tacit understanding only, as to the spirit of reciprocity, and not upon any treaty stipulation. This was the great defect of the treaty".

U.S. critics who viewed the treaty in this way were particularly provoked in the late 1850s when the United Province increased its tariffs on manufactured goods in an effort to make good lost revenues in the wake of the 1857 financial panic (while also appeasing a rising

new class of protectionist Canadian manufacturers). U.S. tariffs on manufactured goods actually remained as high or higher than the new Canadian tariffs. But as an American critic wrote in a Congressional report of the early 1860s, Canadians could "find no justification for the annual increase in their rates of tariff in the assertion that the present rates do not exceed our own. When the treaty was ratified our tariff exceeded theirs."

U.S. attitudes toward the treaty take on their sharpest edge when set in the epic context of the American Civil War, which broke out in 1861 and only ended in 1865 — also the year when Washington gave notice of its intention to abrogate.

Some British North American subjects, in old United Canada and in what is now Atlantic Canada, volunteered to fight in the war, and many more fought for the victorious North than for the defeated South. The mother country in the United Kingdom, however, recognized the South as a legitimate belligerent in the War — to the enormous irritation of the North. The conservative French Catholic and English Tory politicians who slyly combined to dominate the United Province in the late 1850s and early 1860s leaned somewhat toward the South, and on a few occasions Canada was used as a haven for Southern saboteurs.

When the formal American Senate debate on cancelling reciprocity began, Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire pointed to "the excited state of feeling which exists now in consequence of what we conceive to be a great wrong inflicted on us by the authorities of some of those provinces that are particularly affected by this treaty".

Even more important, when the Senate of the American Union finally voted to abrogate the treaty — by a margin of 33 to 8, it did not include the representatives of the secessionist Southern Confederacy, on whom Lord Elgin had earlier plied his champagne diplomacy with such telling effect. It was dominated by northern U.S. politicians who shared Horace Greeley's annexationist sentiments, and who saw reciprocity as a disincentive to the absorption of the British provinces by an expansionary American Union, newly forged in the bloody crucible of "the brothers' war".

In late January and early February 1866 a delegation from the United Province of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick visited Washington to urge a renewal of the treaty. In response, Chairman Morrill of the Ways and Means Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, advised: "That will have to be postponed until you, gentlemen, assume your seats *here*". In July 1866 a bill was introduced (though never voted on) in the House of Representatives, for "the admission of the States of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East, and Canada West, and for the organization of the Territories of Selkirk, Saskatchewan, and Columbia", as part of a still larger and more United States of America.

The Confederation Debates had begun at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in 1864. The beginnings of a modern French and English-speaking democracy in northern North America were established in 1867.

As Donald Masters has pointed out, some supporters of Confederation in the 1860s saw it as an alternative to the renewal of reciprocity with the United States. Yet others saw "Confederation as the necessary precedent to reciprocity", on the view that "a union of the colonies as one body would greatly facilitate the negotiation" of a successor to the U.S.-abrogated Reciprocity Treaty of 1854.

In the same spirit, throughout the remainder of the nineteenth and on into the twentieth century, various Canadian federal governments have recurrently tried to negotiate new reciprocity or free trade agreements with the United States. In 1891 and 1911 slim majorities of the Canadian electorate voted against quite broad Canada-U.S. free trade proposals — at bottom on the argument that mainstream opinion in the post Civil War United States was still not prepared to accept a comprehensive trade relationship that did not point toward the ultimate annexation of Canada.

U.S. opinion on the issue may or may not have changed in the intervening generations. More limited Canadian-American trade agreements were successfully negotiated in the 1930s and the 1960s. The highly diverse, post-colonial Canadian Confederation of the late 1980s is a bolder, more cunning, and much more coherent national enterprise than it was even a half century ago, at the end of the Second World War.

Whatever else, with or without various kinds of trade agreements, economic ties between Canada and the United States — like those in the world economy at large — have continued to grow and develop since the nineteenth century. And the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 introduced a venerable theme in the history of Canada since the Confederation of 1867.

The modern Canadian historian J.L. Granatstein has recently argued that in the continuing saga of the polyethnic wilderness romance in the "northern half of North America", the quest for a stable Canada-U.S. trade relationship is "the issue that will not go away". It is also arguable that, from Canada's standpoint, the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 shows how, under the right conditions and with appropriate attitudes on both sides of the border, the issue can be comprehensively addressed with real success — for at least a period of as long as a dozen years. ♦

Randall White is the author of "Fur Trade to Free Trade: Putting the Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement in Perspective", published by Dundurn Press of Toronto .

Russians On the West Coast

By Alix O'Grady

I will consider myself very fortunate to fulfill the will of the Czar [Alexander I], who wishes his subjects and their descendants to have their share in the natural resources of this earth, which are already exploited by all neighbouring powers. If my projects for improving conditions amongst the people inhabiting this country please His Imperial Majesty, my ambitions will be fully satisfied. Developments here, once begun, will not stop for centuries to come. The Port of New Archangelsk [Sitka], my dear Sirs, so long as our establishments are not extended farther south, will be the capital of the territories occupied by the company [Russian-American] and will be the residence and the site of the administration. Even after we have settlements on the Columbia River, New Archangelsk will still be a centre from which it will be very convenient to take possession of Kaigany [Prince of Wales] Island. There, close to the Charlotte Islands, new shipyards can be built. The fur trade is better there, the timber is of better quality, the climate is good, and it is further south by two degrees. According to Kodiak natives who were prisoners there, the natives on Kaigany are afraid even of Baranov's [Governor of Russian colonies] name and have no cannon. On the Charlotte Islands, as I have stated in my first letter, are forts and artillery. This fact should not affect us, because they take furs to Kaigany to be bartered and sold. Ships from the United States dare not stop there, but sail to Kaigany, where the inhabitants have been friendly to them for a long time now. From there they cruise in the Straits, which under different circumstances would be full of Russian ships. We can send out ships from there to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, if we settle on the Columbia River, and then all trade in sea otters will be in our hands.

To attain this we must build navy brigs and at the same time build a settlement on the Columbia, from which we can spread little by little farther south to the Port of San Francisco, which is the boundary of California. If we have assistance at the start, I feel positive that we will attract settlers from various places to come to the Columbia and in ten years' time our strength will increase so much that we will be able to keep an eye on California's coast in order, the moment that political events in Europe are favourable, to make it a Russian possession.

Count Rezanov
Visiting Plenipotentiary
of the Czar, Sitka, 1805.

Lilly Library, Indiana University

View of Sitka Bay from the Governor's house, 1827, from a drawing by F.H. von Kittlitz.

The astounding content of Count Rezanov's letter reveals Russian ambitions along America's Pacific Northwest Coast. Behind them lie the implications of early Russian achievements, both of a scientific and mercantile nature, during the eighteenth century, which in general have not received the attention they deserve.

When Captain James Cook made his navigational surveys along the Northwest Coast in 1778, he was by no means the first navigator to have come to this area. Four years earlier, Captain Juan Josef Perez Hernandez had arrived at Nootka Sound after having been turned back from the northern tip of the Queen Charlotte Islands by stress of weather and turbulent seas.

Perez' orders issued at San Blas, had come in response to a secret report filtered through from St. Petersburg to Madrid. It contained a warning that Russia was building a huge fur trading empire on the Northwest coast of America. Moreover, there seemed to be proof of Russian incursions into Spain's territorial waters.

Spanish sovereignty had to be safeguarded at all costs and as a consequence, it had been decided to counter this Slavic threat by establishing and consolidating new Spanish missions and presidios such as San Diego, Monterey and San Francisco further to the north.

In addition, a number of naval expeditions were being dispatched in order to reconnoitre the coast and make a show of the flag. Some of these had, indeed, made contact with *los Rusos* and had found them to be decidedly innocuous and most sociable drinking companions. Obviously, sea otter furs did not lie within the orbit of Spanish interests. Thus reassured, the Spaniards concentrated their operations for the next several years around the area of what is known today as Vancouver Island — leaving behind their names as testimony of their explorations.

Cook's observations of Russian activities along the Pacific Northwest Coast, on the other hand, differed markedly from those of the Spaniards. He had recognized the importance of their operations and noted in his journal:

> The [fur] trade in which the Russians are engaged is very beneficial and it is being undertaken and extended to the Eastward of Kamchatka. It was the immediate consequence of the Second Expedition of that able navigator [Bering], whose misfortune [shipwreck] proved to be the source of much private advantage to individuals and of public utility to the Russian nation. And yet, if his distress had not accidentally carried him to die in the island which bears his name, and from whence the miserable remnant

of his ship's crew brought back sufficient specimen of its valuable furs, probably the Russians would never have undertaken any further voyages, which could lead them to make discoveries in this sea, toward the coast of America.

The expedition of Captains Vitus Bering and A.I. Chirikov in 1741-1742 set off for the "Big Land" beyond "for the Glory of Russia". In July, Bering made landfall on Kayak Island at latitude 59°31′, naming the cape and the mountains on the mainland after the saint on whose day he had discovered them: St. Elias. Chirikov had sighted land some time before that at latitude 55°36′, and had worked his vessel in under the shores of Cape Addington, Lulu Island.

Upon their separate returns to Eastern Siberia they had indeed unleashed a stampede of *promyshlenniki* (Russian fur hunters and traders) heading for the bounty of "soft gold" to be found along the coast of the New World.

Ironically, little did Cook know at the time of writing that the publication of his journals in 1784 would produce a similar frenzied rush to the area. Cook's entry does not make it clear whether he realized that as early as 1648, individual and groups of *promyshlenniki* ventured across in flimsy boats from the shores of Eastern Siberia in order to capitalize on the abundance of sea otter and walrus tusks. Thus, Bering's survivors had merely confirmed rumours about "soft gold" which had been circulating in Russia for a century.

What then was the nature of the Russian operations that they should have left an indelible mark upon the events in the history of the Pacific Northwest?

Using the Aleutian Islands as stepping stones, some forty Russian fur trading companies were engaged in fierce competition against each other by 1790, some of them locked in bloody battle. This situation was corrected when in 1799 the Russian American Company was given exclusive monopoly by Czar Paul I.

Created as a joint stock company, it was modelled on the East India Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, and it continued its operations until the sale of Alaska in 1867.

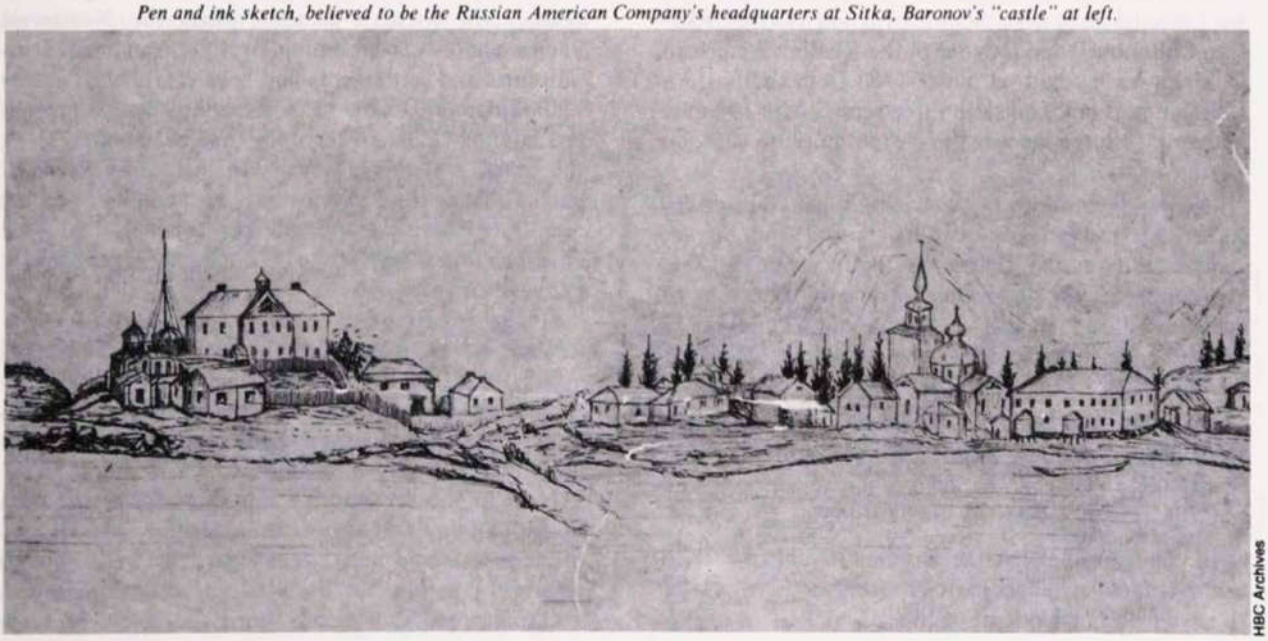
With the Czar as one of its stockholders, it stood directly under the aegis of the Russian government. As was the case with most colonial ventures, however, the interests of the Motherland were, invariably, placed first.

The distinctive feature of Russian maritime fur trade was that the actual hunting operations were carried out by Aleuts. These had been swept into Russian service and were supervised by Russian overseers. The natives' skill in handling skin *baidarkas* and wielding deadly accurate harpoons remained an indispensable feature of obtaining sea otter throughout the existence of the company.

Russian fur trade went in tandem with settlement, and intermarriage between the *promyshlenniki* and native Americans was actively encouraged. The resulting process of mutual acculturation was remarked upon by Captain Vancouver, who was surprised to find in 1794 little difference between the Russians and the American natives because they had adopted each other's food and clothing.

Three decades later, F.P. Lüetke, the well-known Baltic seafarer in Russian service, spoke out in praise on the practice of intermarriage:

Pen and ink sketch, believed to be the Russian American Company's headquarters at Sitka, Baronov's "castle" at left.



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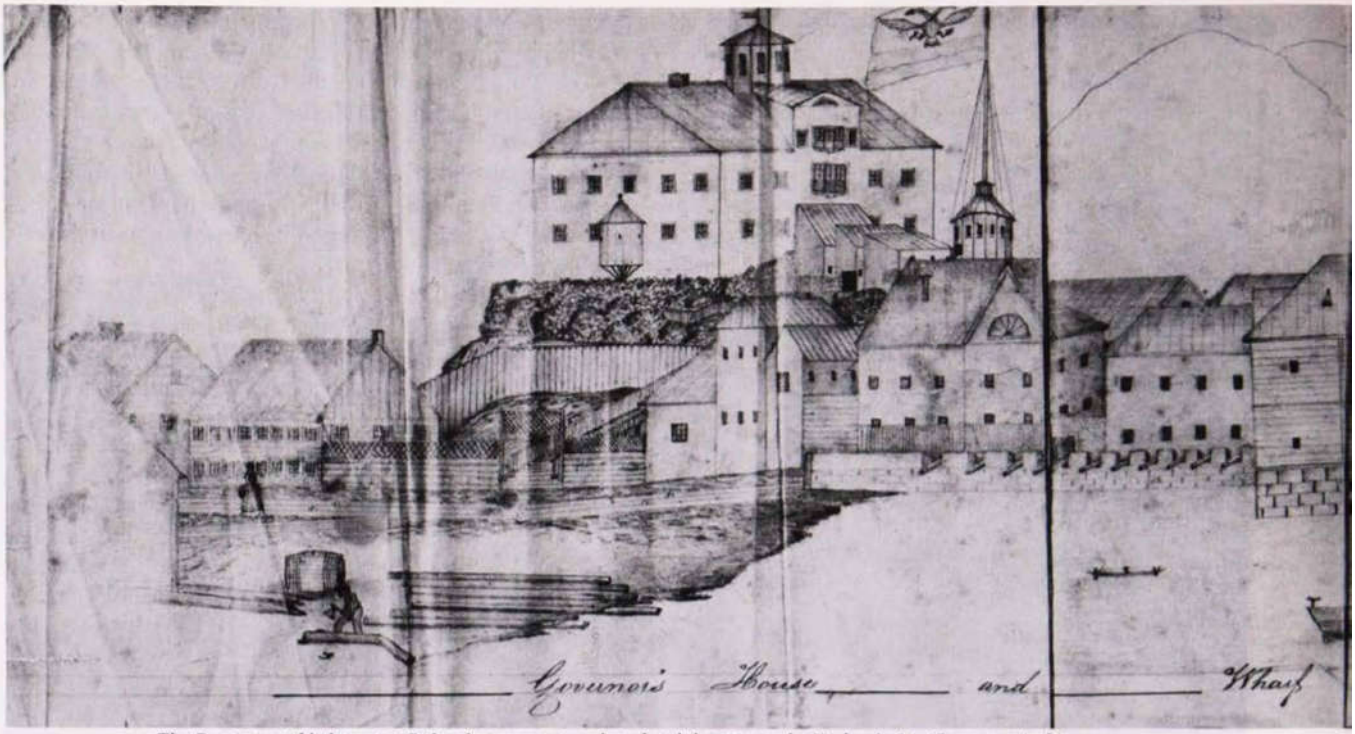


The Russian establishment at Sitka, from an unsigned, undated drawing in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives.

The liaisons between the Russians and the kolosh women (Tlingit) and the new generation resulting from them, are also a vehicle which is growing stronger every day as the two groups come into closer contact.

The first educated white woman to have come to live for two years in the Pacific Northwest, was Madame Natalie A. Shelikhova. She was accompanying her husband Gregorii I. Shelikhov, known as the "Russian Columbus" and founder of the Russian American Company. They had set out in 1783 from the Eastern Siberian port of Okhotsk in three vessels with 192 men and had wintered, as was the custom in those days, on Bering Island.

During the following two years Shelikhov established settlements on Kodiak Island and on the American mainland. Before leaving for home in 1786, the couple made provisions for the introduction of schools and for religious instruction of all children. To his manager in the colonies, Shelikhov left the following directions:

> . . . establish Russian artels in sundry places and [to] pacify the Americans [Indians] and spread the Glory of Russia into the unknown lands of America and California as far as the 40° latitude.

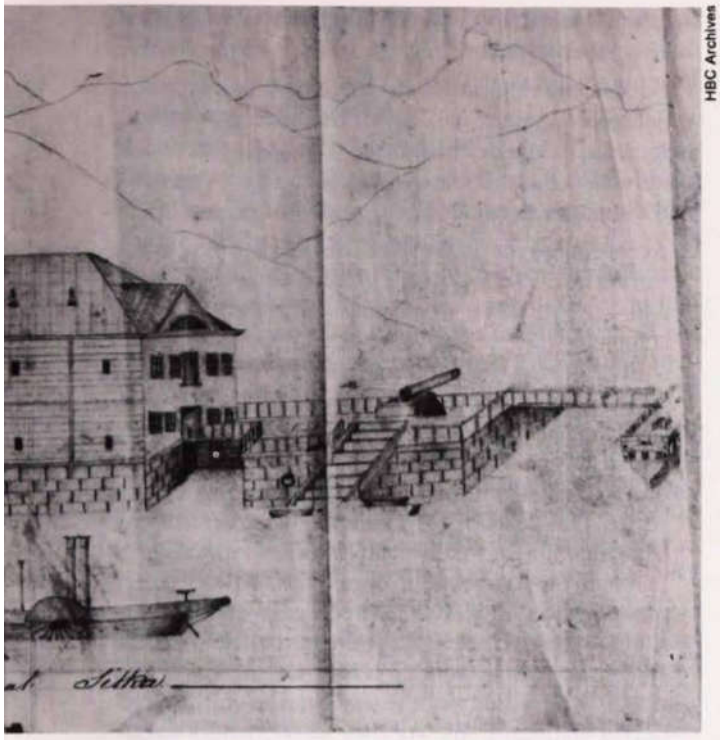
In confirmation that these orders had been carried out satisfactorily, Shelikhov reported two years later to the Governor General of Siberia that:

> . . . along the American mainland from the Island of Kodiak and far beyond Cape St. Elias to California by my order and at company's expense, Imperial emblems have been left in many places, and we hope to have close ties with the peoples (in those places) in order to place them under the Russian sceptre.

It is obvious that toward the end of the eighteenth century the Russian presence along the Northwest Pacific shore was becoming firmly entrenched. Russian forts and settlements had been established; crests of the Imperial Double-headed Eagle as well as plaques proclaiming "Russian Territory" had been placed along the coast, and the legacy of an increasing "creole" population, as the Russians termed them, had become manifest. Russian loanwords and concepts had been absorbed into Indian languages; many of them are still in evidence today.

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century the Russian American Company enjoyed further expansion under the vigorous leadership of Governor Aleksandr Baranov, who had arrived in the colonies in 1792 and held his important post against all odds until 1818.

Next to the fur trade, Baranov gave his attention to shipbuilding and agriculture. Cattle were imported to Kodiak Island and kitchen gardens were planted wherever possible. Yet, despite these various measures a chronic food shortage plagued the colonies every-



HBC Archives

where for provisions from Siberia were irregular, at best.

The only fresh meat available was that of bears, noted Archibald Campbell in 1807. For food the Russians had often to rely on Indian supplies of blubber mixed with fish and berries called *yukola,* which was probably the equivalent to the inland *pemmican.* In order to relieve the prevailing famine, Baranov made plans for a supply farm on the Pacific.

The first Russian circumnavigation of the globe from Kronshtadt was undertaken by Captains Krusenstern and Lisianskii in 1803-1806. Both seafarers had distinguished themselves previously in the service of the British Navy and both had visited other continents. For their first circumnavigation they had chosen two British vessels they had "discovered" in the Thames, which had to be remodelled, refitted and renamed before they could set out from Russia for the Pacific Northwest and extend their country's interests further into the South Pacific.

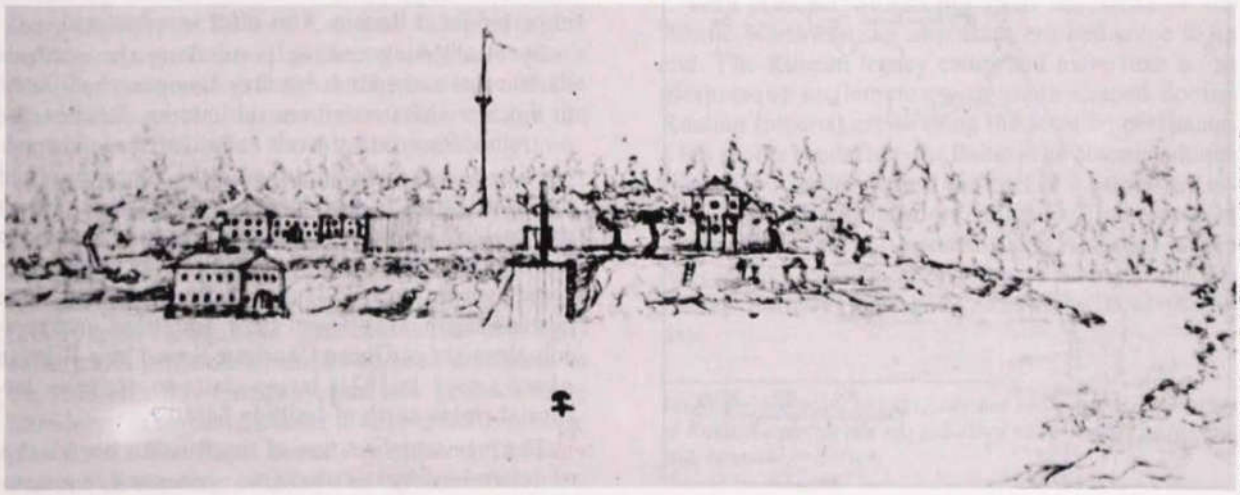
From this point in time when Russian vessels rounded the Horn, not all of them headed for the Pacific Northwest. Some of them would sail to the South Seas to such places as Tahiti, the Marquesans, the Solomon Islands, Port Jackson or New Zealand with instructions to carry out various surveys of a scientific nature. The Baltic Captain Bellingshausen, for instance, ably took the *Vostok* in 1820 to the icy shores of Antarctica, thereby establishing a claim made by Soviet Russia to this day.

As the map of the Northwest Coast of America was rapidly filling up with Slavic and Baltic names, the original source and bounty leading to all the related activity, was on the decline. In accordance, the hunt for precious sea otter pelts had to be taken further south. Along the coast of California combined hunting expeditions were now being carried out by the Russians, who provided the expert Aleut hunters, and the Americans who, in exchange for furs, offered the necessary provisions and materials which the impoverished Russians lacked.

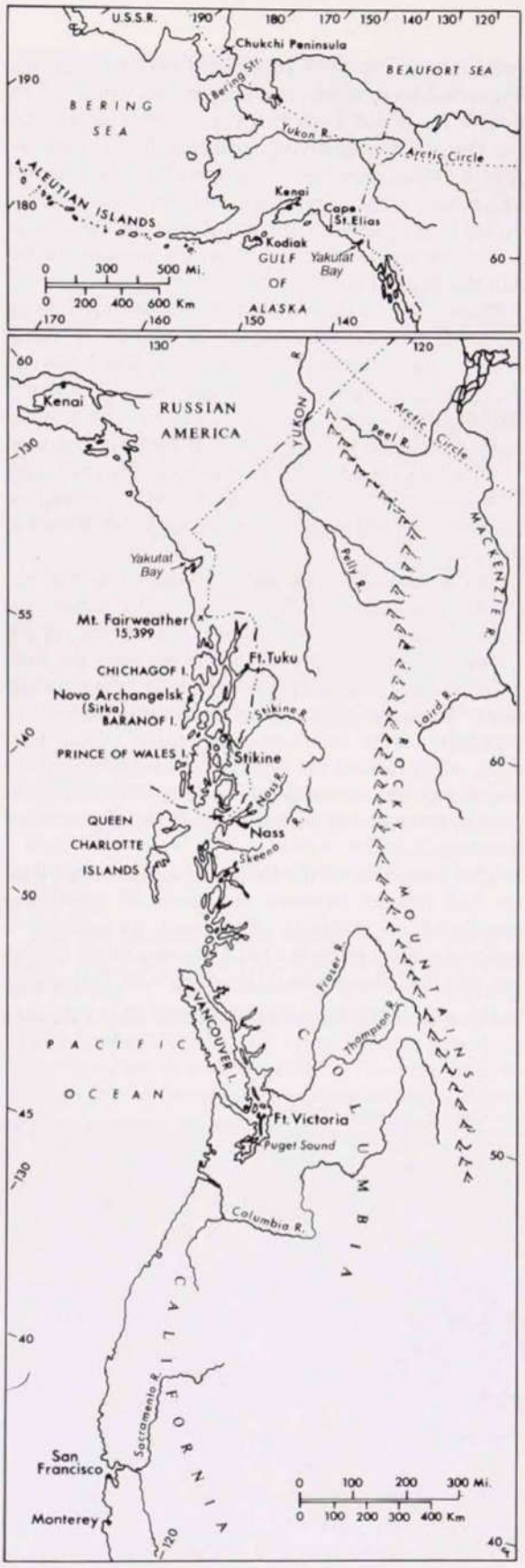
That the arrival of the British in waters where Russia had reigned supreme for some 40 years was considered an intrusion of Russian sovereignty, is understandable. Early in 1790, Governor Pil' of Irkutsk had sent the following scathing notice to St. Petersburg:

I pass over the British in silence — they have long

Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island in Juan de Fuca Strait, sketch by I.G. Voznesenskii, Russian Scientific Expedition to the Northwest Coast of America, 1839-1849.



Courtesy of Professor R.A. Pierce, Queen's University



since been attempting to steal treasure belonging to Russia — not them.

Besides, the English were accused of renaming places which the Russians had discovered and named long before. Madame N. Shelikhova, who had been elected co-director of the Russian American Company after her husband's death in 1795, wrote:

> According to the newspapers, the English expedition started in 1793. In 1794 they visited Chugach, Kenai, and Yakutat Bays, where the hunting artels of my company were located. The expedition consisted of a three masted frigate, the *Discovery,* under Captain Vancouver and a two masted frigate, the *Chatham,* commanded by Captain Puget. They explored very thoroughly, making soundings even in the smallest inlets. In Yakutat Bay their third ship, a trading vessel, made a call. They met the hunters of my company, Purtov and his comrades, and asked them how long the Russians had owned this territory. After receiving the answer that this region and the territory beyond L'tua Bay belonged to Russia since 1741, they contested this claim, stating that their rights were based on the discoveries of the celebrated Captain Cook. As they were friendly to our people, they were treated in the same way.

After the turn of the century, the number of British vessels involved in fur trade along the coast of the Pacific Northwest had shrunk from thirty-five to only three. However, in their place, the "Boston Men" were offering the Russians stiff competition. To make matters worse, the Russians were forced, for reasons of survival, into an unholy alliance with their latest rivals, involving the exchange of furs for American provisions.

This situation worsened when, in 1825, the Hudson's Bay Company arrived on the scene, sending official notice to the Russian American Company of its entry into the coastal trade. In a bid to oust the American competitors from the arena, the Honourable Company offered to supply the Russian colonies with goods imported from Britain. This offer was declined.

By establishing trading posts along the northern Pacific shore, the Hudson's Bay Company had hoped to link up with its trade in the interior. Besides, the protracted uncertainty over a definitive Oregon boundary line between the English and the Americans, had motivated them to search well north of their present site on the Columbia River, in order to ensure for a more stable future.

As members of the Hudson's Bay Company were pushing north, they found their ambitions unexpectedly thwarted at Queen Charlotte Sound by a Russian *ukase* passed in 1821, laying claim to exclusive territorial rights north of latitude 54°40′.

The precise delineation of the Russian boundaries, as determined by the *ukase*, was reiterated in a state-

ment by the Governor of Russian America, Baron F. P. Wrangell, who was spending five years from 1830 onward with his family at the fur trading centre of Novo Archangelsk-Sitka:

> The boundary of the Russian possessions in America runs from the southern end of Prince of Wales Island at latitude 54°40′ north, and between longitude 131° and 133° west, north along the Portland Canal to the mainland at latitude 56° and along the mountain range which runs parallel to the coast as far as longitude 141° west, that is, as far as Mount St. Elias; from here, the boundary between Russian and British possessions follows the continuation of the meridian as far as the Arctic Ocean. All lands and islands west of this line belong to Russia and are administered by the Russian American Company on the basis of privileges granted by the Tsar. The Aleutian, Commander and Kurile Islands as far as the southern tip of the island of Urup are included.
>
> To the east, the Russian American Company's possessions are bounded by the territory of the English Hudson's Bay Company, to the west by Kamchatka and Japan, while in the north they are lost in the Arctic ice. Since 1812 the Company has occupied territory on Bodega Bay, on the Coast of New Albion, (Upper California), with the permission of its ruler, and is therefore the neighbour of the North American Spaniards, now the Republic of Mexico.

Again in 1830, an invasion by the Hudson's Bay Company of what the Russians considered their territorial waters led to a diplomatic collision, when a Russian redoubt on the mouth of the Stikine refused the British vessel *Dryad* entry to the river. It took Governor Simpson and Governor Wrangell some nine years until they could smooth out all political wrinkles and settle the matter at a private meeting in Hamburg — to the satisfaction of both parties.

The agreement called for dropping an indemnity charge against the Russian American Company which had arisen out of the affair. In return the Hudson's Bay Company was granted a ten-year lease of the coastal strip south of Mount Fairweather, which is the territory now known as the Alaskan Panhandle.

Thus the Hudson's Bay Company had obtained its initial objective by replacing the Americans in the provisioning of Russian America. Yet the bargain had come at a price. In fact, it struck at the very core of the Company's strictest policies which would have, in future, to be relinquished. This meant that both agriculture and settlement, which had been anathema to the Hudson's Bay Company, had now perforce to be introduced in earnest, in order to ensure sufficient supplies for all. The Puget Sound Agricultural Company was one of the outgrowths of this arrangement.

Count Nikolay Petrovich Rezanov: a dream of empire abandoned.

The sale of Alaska to the U.S. in 1867 for $7,200,000 after the Russian position in America appeared to become untenable did not remain without its effects on the newly proclaimed United Colony of British Columbia. The latter found itself suddenly in an uncomfortable pincer-position, with the United States bordering to the north now as well as to the south. Inevitably, this exerted some pressure on the question as to whether to join the Union of Canada, the United States, or whether simply to remain a colony of Britain.

With Russian withdrawal from the arena of the Pacific Northwest, an important era had come to an end. The Russian legacy comprised more than a few picturesque settlements with onion-shaped domes, Russian Imperial crests along the coast or, perchance, a few amber beads from the Baltic in an obscure antique shop. After having played the part of a catalyst, Russian America continued to influence the course of history along the Northwest Coast of America — with far-reaching consequences for both Canada and the United States. This legacy remains with us to this day. ♦

Vancouver historian Alix O'Grady has made an extensive study of Russian America and has published many articles on the subject, here and in Europe.

Women of the Klondike

Some Came to Do the Work of the Lord — Others Came Only to Mine the Miners

By FRANCES H. BACKHOUSE

"There are strange things done in the midnight sun by the men who moil for gold", wrote poet Robert W. Service — but what of the *women* of the Klondike gold rush?

Although they were far fewer in number, women played an important part in the gold rush story and, contrary to popular myth, not just as prostitutes and dance hall entertainers. The entrepreneurs, domestics, nuns, doctors, nurses, journalists, and loyal wives have all been routinely ignored by the writers of history, as have the women who moiled for gold beside the men.

No one knows exactly how many women joined the Klondike gold rush. One survey showed that approximately one in every thirty people on the Trail of '98 was female. At the height of the gold rush, in the summer of 1898, there were approximately 16,000 people in Dawson; if the one in thirty figure is broadly applicable, some five hundred of these would have been women. Regardless of actual numbers, it is clear that the female population of Dawson increased in both absolute and relative terms from 1897 onward.

Women rushed to the Klondike for the same reasons as did men. They were seeking wealth or adventure, or both. While adventure was there for all who sought it, wealth was harder to come by. There were two approaches to making a Klondike fortune: mining gold, or mining the miners. The first was less accessible to women because of society's expectations and because unmarried women were not permitted to stake claims. But the other approach offered considerable scope, and women took full advantage of it.

The written record of feminine involvement in the gold rush speaks little for the average working woman. Not surprisingly, most accounts of the Klondike were written by men and reflect the masculine experience. The small selection of books penned by women are either second-hand accounts based on the male versions, or memoirs of ladies of leisure. Particulars about the lives of others must be gleaned from scant references scattered through the literature.

Perhaps the best representatives of the ladies of leisure were the indomitable Mrs. Mary E. Hitchcock and her travelling companion, Miss Edith Van Buren. These American high-society ladies spent the summer of 1898 living in a huge tent pitched on a hillside overlooking Dawson. Travelling with everything from a parrot and two dozen pigeons to a portable bowling alley, they no doubt made an impact on Dawson, even though their sojourn was during the height of the gold rush excitement. Hitchcock's book *Two Women in the Klondike* was much like herself — large and imposing, and highly opinionated — but it provides a close look at Klondike society from a female point of view.

Martha Black straddles the line between the leisured ladies and working women, and hers is one of the best accounts of Klondike life from a female perspective. In her autobiography, *My Ninety Years* (published by Alaska Northwest Publishing Company in 1976), she includes many observations about her peers, along with her own fascinating story.

When news of the gold rush broke in 1897, Martha, who was then Mrs. Will Purdy, was living in Chicago.

University of Alaska Archives

Actresses fording the Dyea River en route to the Klondike; undated.

Hers was a comfortable, upper-middle class life. Like so many others, the Purdys leapt at the Klondike opportunity. In a society that was burning with gold fever, actions which normally would have been considered irresponsible were condoned and even applauded. The couple left their two sons with her parents and formed an expedition party with several friends and Martha's brother. Martha was entrusted with a special task of finding a Klondike legacy owed to a family friend.

The party had reached Seattle when Will Purdy decided that he and his wife should not go north. His refusal to proceed was matched with equal vigour by Martha's determination not to turn back. She wanted adventure and the half a million dollar reward she had been promised if she located the legacy. The unhappy outcome of their deadlock was that they parted company in Seattle and never saw each other again. Had they known at the time that Martha was pregnant, they might have behaved differently. As it was, Martha was in Dawson with winter settling in before she became aware of her condition. By then there was no possibility of a return trip, and Martha's third son was born in her log cabin home in January.

The birth itself was easy — far easier than her earlier ordeal of crossing the Chilkoot Pass. While Chilkat Indian women were regularly hired to carry heavy loads up the steep grade, a woman with Martha's life experience was ill-prepared for such an arduous trek. Compounding her lack of physical fitness was her inappropriate wardrobe. Martha's travelling outfit consisted of an ankle-length corduroy skirt that measured five yards around the bottom hem; a blouse with a high, stiff collar; a close-fitting, pleated jacket; and high, leather boots. Underneath all this were the obligatory heavily-boned corsets, woolen stockings and a pair of voluminous silk bloomers. It is little wonder that her brother had to literally push and pull her up the last few hundred feet to the top of the pass.

Although she never located the legacy, Martha fell in love with the North and chose to remain in Dawson. As one of the elite group of "respectable" women, she enjoyed considerable prestige. For men, the gold rush was a great leveler; they sweated and drank together as equals. But the strict Victorian class boundaries were not blurred for women. Martha noted three classes of women in the Klondike, though not every woman would fit into one of her categories. At the bottom were the prostitutes. Next the dance hall girls and entertainers, and at the top, "a few others, wives with unbounded faith in love for their mates, or the odd person like myself on a special mission".

Archives of the Sisters of Saint Ann, Victoria

The Roman Catholic Sisters of Saint Ann operated a hospital and did other good works among the miners.

Life at the bottom of Dawson's social hierarchy was not easy. The veteran prostitutes, who came mainly from other northern mining camps and American west coast cities, knew what to expect. They faced a high probability of dying young from venereal diseases, tuberculosis, malnutrition, or violence at the hands of pimps or clients. Many also committed suicide. For a while, though, Dawson may have offered them a better than average life; women of any sort were such a rare commodity that even prostitutes were tolerated and given a degree of protection by the North West Mounted Police. Nevertheless, the main concern of the police was the maintenance of law and order, not the well-being of scarlet women.

In the early, chaotic days of the gold rush, prostitutes worked wherever they pleased, with little or no interference from the authorities. Their freedom was initially curtailed in 1898 when the police instituted a policy of monthly arrests and fifty dollar fines for all known prostitutes. This was followed by the introduction of a bi-weekly medical inspection programme, conducted by the territorial health officer and the NWMP surgeon. Women who were infected were detained until deemed safe once more.

The next step was to restrict where prostitutes could live. In the spring of 1899 they were all ordered to relocate to an official red-light district. Later, as life settled down in Dawson and more wives and families arrived, public pressure led to the expulsion of all known prostitutes from town. Many had already departed in the 1900 stampede to Nome, Alaska; the following year, those who remained were forced to move across the Klondike River to Klondike City, commonly known as "Lousetown".

Dance hall girls and entertainers were categorized as non-respectable but, because of the unbalanced sex ratio, commanded a central position in early Klondike society. Men looked to the dance halls, saloons and music halls for human warmth and cheer, especially during the cold days of winter when arctic darkness shrouded the land.

The women who met these needs were well paid but worked hard for their money. Dance hall girls received a salary of about twenty-five dollars a week, plus commissions on dances and drinks. The one or two minute long dances cost a dollar each, of which half went to the woman. Custom dictated that when the music stopped after each dance, the man led his partner to the bar and bought her a drink, usually lemonade or ginger ale. The point of this, of course, was to encourage the men to buy hard liquor or champagne for themselves. Alcoholic drinks never cost less than a dollar each, and the women received a commission of 25 to 50 percent on every one purchased by their partners.

Larger dance halls had curtained boxes which could be rented by patrons wanting more privacy. No doubt some intimacy went on behind the curtains, but few dance hall girls doubled as prostitutes. What the more opportunistic and less principled among them did take advantage of the privacy for was "rolling" customers; that is, getting them drunk so they could steal their gold.

Contemporary female observers expressed varied opinions about dance hall girls. Martha Black said that they were "often beautiful, invariably had good figures, and many were clever and resented the stigma generally attached to their profession". Luella Day, a doctor who practised in Dawson during the gold rush, was not so kind. "The women . . . were not what you would call raving beauties", she wrote, "but there was a frank exposure of such charms as they imagined they had, for they wore dresses abbreviated at both ends, thus exposing their necks and their arms and their legs up to their knees".

Dance hall girls were not as anonymous as prostitutes and some even won lasting fame or, in certain cases, notoriety. Often they used assumed names, or earned nicknames through their actions or appearances. One, called the Oregon Mare, wore sharply pointed shoes and when angered would kick her victim with great rapidity and painful precision.

Diamond Tooth Gertie was famous for the diamond stud she had had inserted between her two front teeth.

Even after she retired and married one of Dawson's leading lawyers, she kept her glittering smile. Cad Wilson was known for her theme song — "Such a Nice Girl Too" — and for her belt of gold nuggets, the longest one in all of Dawson. They were among the dance hall queens during the height of the gold rush, but it is a late-comer who is best remembered today. Pretty, vivacious, nineteen-year-old Kate Rockwell blazed into town with her spectacular flame dance in 1900. She left Dawson four years later as the rich and famous Klondike Kate, and lived off that reputation for the rest of her life.

Women who performed on stage in addition to dancing and drinking with the customers were called variety girls. They were considered to be a cut above the non-performers, or percentage girls. The elite among the entertainers were those who were talented enough that they never had to mingle with the audience to earn money, and so could retain their respectability. One of the most popular was Margie Newman, a charming nine-year-old singer who reminded the men of beloved daughters and sisters left back home. The miners showed their appreciation for Newman and other favourites by showering the stage around their feet with nuggets and bags of gold dust.

Despite the good times and high living, dance and music halls were not places where most women wanted

Glenbow Museum

Klondike dance hall girl, circa 1900.

Faith Fenton of the Toronto "Globe" went to Dawson to cover the gold rush. She was one of several female journalists on the Trail of '98.

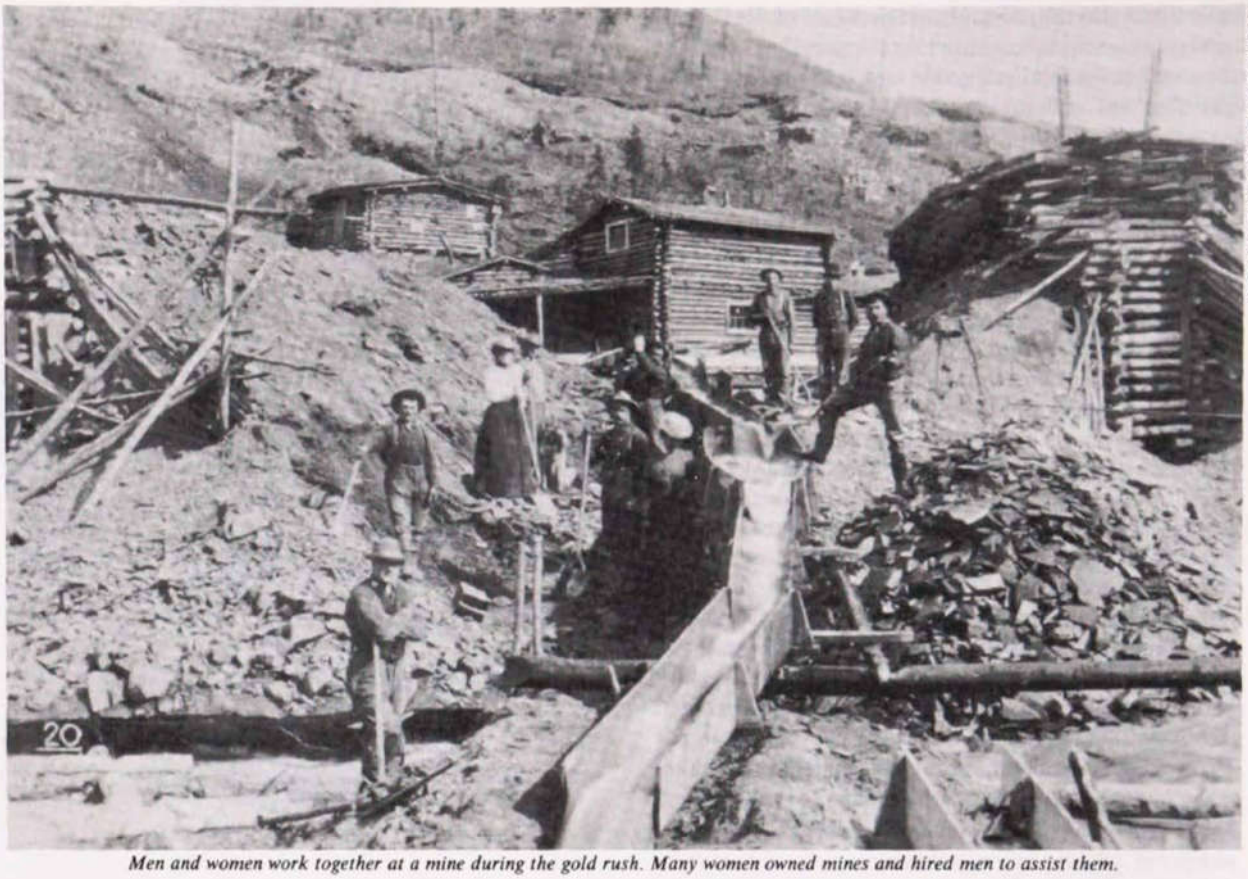
Glenbow Museum

to work all their lives. Like prostitutes, they were subject to the undesirable behaviour of drunken men and the discomfort of crowded living quarters. During the constant night of winter, drinking and dancing went on around the clock, and they had little respite from the revelry. Martha Black recalled that "most of the girls paid the price of this gay wild life in full. The longest they could stand its fast pace was five to ten years".

A town like Dawson, filled with prostitution, drinking, gambling and other forms of debauchery, was the perfect place to look for souls to save. Much of the religious work was done by women, who combined their spiritual efforts with plenty of practical hard work. The Klondike was a test of their stamina and their faith.

The Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists did not train or pay women to do church work in the North, but most of the men they sent were married. Besides supporting their husbands' efforts, the ministers' wives often worked independently to ease the suffering of the sick and poor, and held important positions in the social hierarchy of the town.

In May 1898, the Salvation Army sent an eight-person contingent to the Klondike. The two women in the group spent much of their time nursing. Unlike



National Archives of Canada/G.G. Murdoch

Men and women work together at a mine during the gold rush. Many women owned mines and hired men to assist them.

the other Protestant churchwomen, they were both apparently single.

The greatest contribution made by any churchwomen to Dawson society was the work of the Catholic Sisters of Saint Ann. This small community of dedicated women operated St. Mary's Hospital, beginning in 1898. The Sisters' first year was a challenging one, for the hospital facilities were quite inadequate to deal with the typhoid epidemic which hit Dawson that summer. More than 1,100 patients occupied beds in St. Mary's during 1898, with a peak load of 140 during the month of October. Throughout this time, the only regular hospital personnel were six nuns. There were few trained doctors or nurses in Dawson and it was not easy to obtain the services of those who were around. The nuns themselves had no formal medical training, but according to one doctor who worked with them, they were very competent. The rate of recovery from typhoid at St. Mary's compared favourably to the recovery rate, during the same period, at hospitals in Winnipeg, where typhoid was also prevalent.

It was largely due to the efforts of women that a new and larger hospital was constructed. The ladies of the Dawson parish organized a charity bazaar for the 1899 Christmas season which netted $12,000 for the cause. The nuns raised further funds by touring the gold creeks and canvassing the miners. Such an undertaking was not easy for these women who lived essentially sheltered lives. Despite their trepidation, they were greeted with respectful cordiality and collected generous donations. Eventually, enough money was acquired and the new St. Mary's Hospital was completed in 1906.

Not all nursing was done by churchwomen. A small number of independent female doctors and nurses travelled to the Klondike, and Dawson was also the proving grounds for the Sisters of Saint Ann's secular equivalent. In 1898, the newly established Victorian Order of Nurses sent four recruits to Dawson, where their accomplishments provided ample evidence of the value of this organization.

Possibly the least appreciated but most essential female employees in the Klondike were women working in the traditional domestic realm. Laundries, bakeries, restaurants, hotels, roadhouses and tailoring shops did exceptional business in this society of men without wives or mothers. Unfortunately, there is almost no record of the experiences of women in these jobs.

Better known are those who worked in non-traditional jobs, such as journalists Faith Fenton (Toronto

Globe), Nellie Bly (New York *World*) and Flora Shaw (colonial editor for the London *Times*), all of whom were sent to report on the gold rush. But contrary to popular myth, the non-traditional opportunities available to women in the Klondike were not unique. As the presence of these journalists suggests, employment patterns in Dawson were simply a reflection of changes occurring in large cities throughout North America and Britain. Between 1870 and 1920, the American female labour force increased by more than 63 percent. Dawson, with its predominantly American population, followed this trend.

Not all Klondike working women were employed by others. Its boom town economy made Dawson an entrepreneur's paradise and many women started their own businesses.

The most successful and colourful businesswoman of the gold rush era was Belinda Mulrooney. She was not new to the business world when she joined the stampede to the Klondike, where her shrewd dealings eventually made her a millionaire. Mulrooney arrived in Dawson in 1897 with $5,000 worth of trade goods, which she sold for $30,000. She then proceeded, against everyone's advice, to build a hotel fourteen miles from town. From this single enterprise grew the thriving community of Grand Forks. The ever-astute Mulrooney had accurately predicted the need for services closer to where the miners were working.

Mulrooney also purchased a number of mining claims and applied her excellent business sense to making these investments pay off. Although for the sake of appearances she hired foremen, Mulrooney was actively involved in managing her mines. She was strong-willed and independent, but did not ally herself with the feminist movement.

Details of business ventures undertaken by other women are scarce, but a Mrs. J.T. Willis is remembered because hers was the classic rags to riches story, of the kind which fed the gold rush dreams of millions. Because her husband was an invalid and she was the primary wage earner, she set off for the Alaska gold fields in 1896. There she staked a claim, hired men to work it, and baked bread to finance its operation. When news of the Klondike strike reached Alaska, Willis hurried to the Yukon and staked another claim. In Dawson she switched her personal business efforts to

Women and families added a strong note of respectability to Dawson society by 1900.

Vancouver Public Library

Vancouver Public Library

Belinda Mulrooney's tent road house opened in the autumn of 1898 selling liquor and cigars. A log structure next door offered food and lodging. Two men and two women, possibly including Belinda Mulrooney and her friend Mrs. Rothweiler, pose outside.

running a laundry. Her enterprises were so successful that by 1897, the Chicago *Record* reported she was worth a quarter of a million dollars.

It was not uncommon for women like Willis and Mulrooney to hire men to work their claims. As well, married women often staked claims which their husbands mined. Many bachelors objected to this practice on the grounds that it put them at a disadvantage, but the prospecting regulations discriminated much more against spinsters. Married women could file new claims; single women were only allowed to purchase claims that had already been filed.

Despite the hard physical labour required, a small number of women — married, widowed or single — worked alone on their own claims. The quintessential female gold seeker was Nellie Cashman, who was once described as "a lone figure in the wilderness, who had surmounted all the obstacles with which nature had beset her path, and had talked out of existence all those put in her way by men". Cashman, who was apparently single, had been a prospector for years before the Klondike gold rush and continued this life afterwards. One of the few stories recorded about Cashman recalls her being turned out of a trail camp after supper because the men "feared for her reputation — or theirs — if she was allowed to remain in camp after dark". It is not surprising that she was remembered as being tough and independent; she may have had little choice.

The women of the Klondike, ranging from Mary Hitchcock to Nellie Cashman, cannot be summed up in a single word, unless that word is diversity. Individuals varied widely in their motives for travelling to the Klondike and their experiences once they arrived. The female images which are most popularly evoked in connection with the Klondike are those of prostitutes and entertainers, yet even they are misrepresented, for there is rarely any acknowledgement of the harsh realities of their lives.

There were dozens of fascinating characters among the gold rush women, as well as many ordinary individuals. They need not be glorified, but they should be remembered. The real importance of their stories lies in the depth which they add to our understanding of a magic time in Canadian history. The Klondike would not have been as colourful had it been an all-male event. Nor would Dawson have grown beyond the gold rush, without the wives and paid domestics, the women of religion and of business, and all the others who moiled for gold, one way or another. ◆

Writer Frances H. Backhouse lives on Hornby Island, British Columbia.

Revenge of the Paris Hat

The European Craze for Wearing Headgear Had a Profound Effect on Canadian History

By HUGH GRANT

"We are very ill-informed even of the names of the articles we wear. People come to years of discretion scarce know the difference between a plain Hat and a Lundardi, and I have heard a lady, who I was told had a very good education, mistake a Parachute for a Fitzherbert . . ."

-*The Lounger*, no. 76, 1786

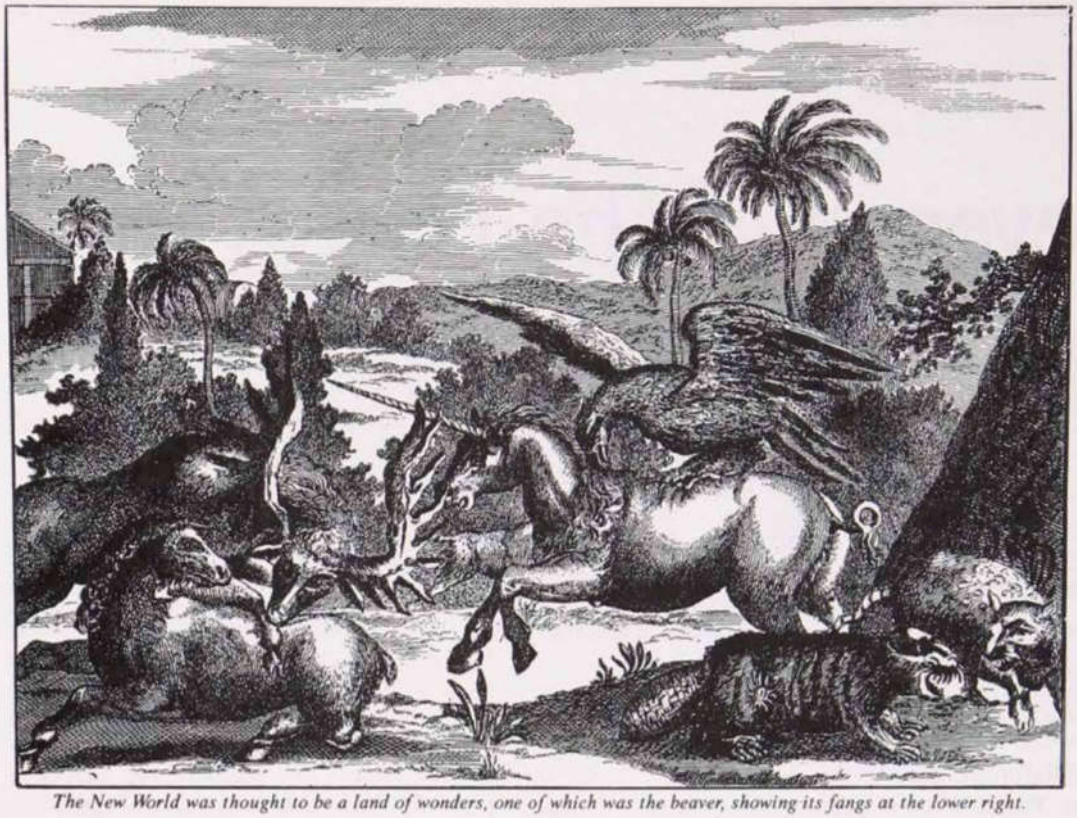
"Hats are the universal headcovering in England, even for workingmen, hats of the most diverse forms, round, high, broad-brimmed, narrow-brimmed, or without brims — only the younger men in factory towns wearing caps. Any one who does not own a hat folds himself a low, square paper cap."

-Frederick Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1844

It has frequently been said that the North American fur trade presupposed the rise to fashion of the felt hat in Europe. Beaver "wool" — the short, soft, barbed undercoat — was the hatters' fur *par excellence* and a raw material essential to the manufacture of luxury felt hats. The contest among nations for control of the fur trade, then, is as much a story of competition in the European hatting industry as it is about military exploits in North America. Unfortunately, insufficient attention has been paid to the source of final demand in determining the pace and pattern of North American economic development during the fur trade. For while England was able to claim victory in the pursuit to adorn the heads of the European bourgeois with felt hats made from beaver, France was quick to extract its revenge. By 1840, the Parisian silk hat had all but eliminated the English felt-hat industry and precipitated major changes in the demand for Canadian beaver.

Headdress has always served as a symbol of rank and status. The cap, usually of a woven fabric, was a traditional headwear of more humble classes in Europe. The well-to-do favoured "Bever hattes . . . fetched from beyond the sea". Made in one piece with a crown and brim, by felting rather than weaving, the hat was important to the social-climber. Thus even Chaucer's merchant sported "Upon his heed a Flanndrush bever hat".

The origins of the North American fur trade have been linked to the popularity of the cavalier's hat, incidental to Swedish military success in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). The reason for this is clear: beaver fur alone had the requisite felting qualities to hold the shape of such an imposing hat with its wide, flowing brim. Embodying the romantic appeal and military bearing of the Swedish army, when transferred to the setting of the Court of Versailles it was evidence of "an honourably futile existence". The grace and elegance of the brim was exaggerated to such absurd proportions that any pretense to productive activity could be easily dismissed. This was followed by the less ostentatious tricorne and other "cocked" hats, where the brim was turned up at two or three points.



The New World was thought to be a land of wonders, one of which was the beaver, showing its fangs at the lower right.

The fashion in English hats was to assume a different path following the Civil War and Restoration. Counterposed to the sumptuosity of the French style, was the sober Puritan hat — a steeped crown with a stiff brim and little ornamentation — which better reflected the ethics of frugality and industry.

Predictably, the French Revolution resulted in a radical departure from the cavalier's hat. A rising bourgeois class posed an alternative to the aristocratic precept of social status, and this was reflected in the adoption of English fashion. "Anglomania" or fashion "à l'anglaise" replaced the more ostentatious symbols of court pomp.

The subsequent development of the top hat was, more or less, a refinement of the Puritan hat. The finely crafted, black-dyed "Beaver" distinguished the European upper classes from more common folk who sported caps, hats and bonnets made from wool or lesser quality furs. Industrial life ceased to be dishonourable as long as the distinction was maintained between capital and labour. The top hat bespoke a complete abstention from industrial labour without involving the highly sumptuous display of aristocratic leisure. The new ethics of industry and frugality placed less emphasis on conspicuous leisure in masculine dress, which in turn accounts for the durability of male fashion styles. The top hat became an expensive investment item: it was strong, stout, and waterproof, and it could be reblocked or even remodelled if made entirely of beaver. Changes were limited to such things as the height of the crown — ranging from the 1½ inch "chimney pot" to the 7½ inch "kite-high dandy" — as subtler displays of social prestige.

This is not to suggest that conspicuous consumption disappeared; instead, Thorstein Veblen has suggested that the dress of women and domestic servants became an outlet for "imputing pecuniary respectability to the master through conspicuous waste". Even public servants such as postal clerks and stage coach hands began to wear the "high white beaver" as a part of their standard dress in the late eighteenth century. And quite apart from the reality of housework, the public attire of women went "even farther than that of men in the way of demonstrating the wearer's abstinence from productive employment. It needs no argument to enforce the generalization that the more elegant styles of feminine bonnets go even farther towards making work impossible than does the man's high hat".

Notwithstanding these changes in fashion, one feature remained unchanged between 1600 and 1800: beaver was the superior wool for felting, such that the fortunes of the North American fur trade and of the

European hatting trades remained intimately related.

Paris, as was the case with most manufactured luxury items in the seventeenth century, was the centre of the hat industry. Two separate events were responsible for shifting the focus of hat production from Paris to London. The first was the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, which removed the religious freedoms previously granted to Protestant Huquenots in France. Since the Huquenots were largely in control of the French hatting trades, their migration to England carried with it the trade secrets and prestige accompanying French craftsmanship. A contemporary observer noted that "the English have now so great an esteem for the workmanship of the French refugees, that hardly anything vends without a Gallic name". And according to Samuel Smiles, "during this period, the French nobility, and all persons making pretensions to dress, wore none but English hats. Even the Roman cardinals got their hats from the celebrated manufactory at Wandsworth, established by the refugees."

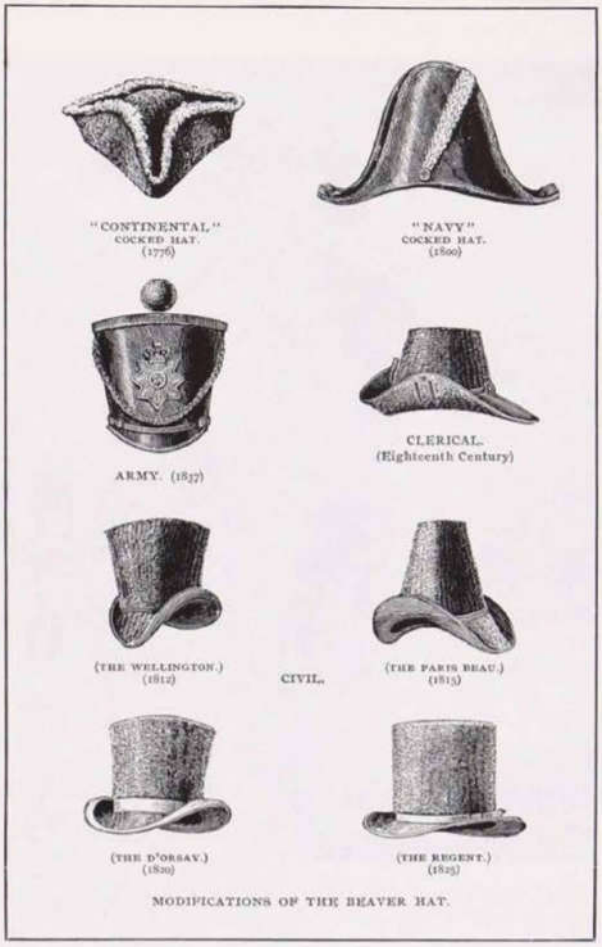
Second, the conquest of New France largely deprived French hatters of their supply of beaver fur, and British mercantile policy was promptly restructured in order to ensure that this remained the case: The importance of the Hudson's Bay Company as a strategic device in the protection of North America had accorded it a favoured position in colonial policy. The Company benefitted from a tariff structure which supported higher London prices for beaver: although a duty of 6 pence per skin was imposed on imports, a 50 percent duty "drawback" was granted on skins subsequently re-exported. This had the effect of encouraging the Company to market furs throughout Europe rather than retaining them for the domestic market. (France, in contrast, had forbidden the re-export of skins to encourage domestic hat manufacturing). With the end to French claims in North America, British colonial policy was restructured to reflect the reduced importance of the Hudson's Bay Company relative to the interests of the domestic hatting trades: the drawback on re-exports was replaced with an export duty in 1764 in order to ensure a greater supply of furs, and thus a lower price, on the London market.

The hatting trade merited such protection given its place within the prevailing mercantilist conception of political economy. Felt hats represented the domestic manufacture of colonial raw materials and supplied both domestic and foreign markets; for this reason, several steps were taken to ensure the expansion of the English industry. Although a petition in 1698 to compel "women and maids of inferior quality" to wear felt hats was not acted upon, Parliament did introduce other protective measures. A heavy duty was placed upon hat imports from Portugal, Spain and Holland, and especially upon French straw hats. And these measures were strictly enforced. The London *Gazette*,

In seventeenth-century France, a great hat indicated a great man.

for example, reported that "thirty dozen and six Hats, being Foreign Goods prohibited by Law . . . were [confiscated] and then openly burnt in the *Woolchurch* Market-place in *London*". Regulations were also imposed upon an upstart American industry which had encroached upon British export markets in the Spanish West Indies. English hatters petitioned Parliament to restrict the making and wearing of non-English hats in the colonies. The resulting "Hat Act" of 1732 disallowed the export of hats from the colonies on the grounds that "the interest of settling our plantations in America [was] that the people there should be employed in such things as are not the product of this kingdom". The Hat Act, however, was generally disregarded and hatting remained a prominent colonial industry.

These regulations helped to enable the English hat industry to flourish during the first half of the eighteenth century. But success also had its price. As early as 1695, Sir William Petty had suggested a duty on hats as a means of raising revenues for war; however, it was not until 1784 that the industry was deemed to have matured to such a point as to enable it to support



MODIFICATIONS OF THE BEAVER HAT.

a licensing fee for establishments and a sales tax. The latter was repealed in 1811, but not before it provided a temporary livelihood for the poet William Wordsworth who held a position as hat "stamp" collector.

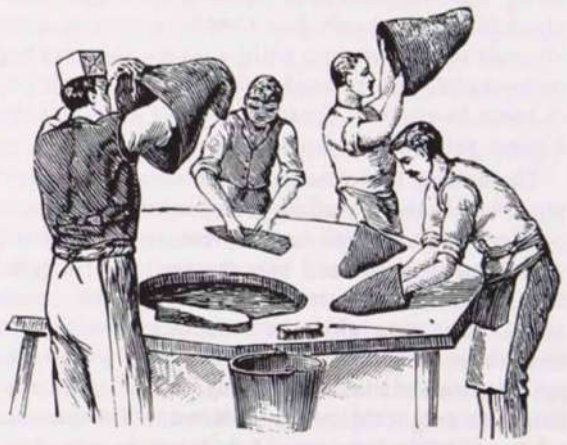
With control of the hatting trades passing to England, the fortunes of the North American fur trade became more directly intertwined with the development of the English industry. The production of caps and hats had always been a mainstay of the rural village economy; however, by 1667 the luxury trade was centred in London under the exclusive monopoly of The Worshipful Company of Feltmakers. Thus there evolved two distinct branches of trade: the provincial industry was confined to coarser felts of wool and coney (rabbit), with beaver hats made almost exclusively in London.

The production of luxury felt hats placed paramount importance upon the skill of the craftsman. The skilled hatter usually received the fur after it had been sheared from the skin, cleaned and graded. He was then responsible for the weighing and mixing of the "scale", calculated according to the fineness and felting qualities of the fur. Wool from the back and sides of a pelt was more valuable, while the quality of fur used ranged from the poorest domestic hare to the prized *castor gras* or coat beaver (skins worn by the Indians and with the valued "wool" exposed and well greased by use). Lesser quality furs were treated to enhance the felting qualities. Unfortunately for the craftsman, in many cases this meant boiling the fur in a mixture of water and urine. The scale was then "bowed" by passing what resembled an overgrown violin bow over the pile of fur and lightly vibrating the string to produce an even layer of fur with all of the hair lying in the same direction. Through the application of heat and pressure, the fur was felted into two large batts which formed the main body, and two smaller pieces which were used to reinforce the joints. The procedure of "planking" further increased the tightness of the felted hood. The hood was then "blocked" into the appropriate shape, and was then subjected to a finishing process whereby it was dyed, stiffened, waterproofed, reblocked, ironed and the brim trimmed to the appropriate form. A final "tipping off" modified the hat to the dictates of current fashion.

While the complete production process involved several different stages, the only real subdivision of work was between makers and finishers. Thus a workshop of journeymen and a master hatter made hats through each process, with sub-contracting limited to the "johnny-boy" who ran for beer. This production process required a highly skilled labour force. The making of a tightly felted hood of even thickness and without an obvious seam entailed both manual dexterity and years of experience; finishing demanded detailed attention to the length of nap, the degree of polish, the shape of the brim, and a wide variety of styles.

Catering to the luxury market, journeymen hatters

Hatters at work.



THE HOOD,
OR BEAVER HAT IN ITS FIRST FORM.

were in a position to establish themselves as one of the best paid crafts. Journeymen hatters were the first representatives of the tradition of trade unionism, forming an association four months after the establishment of the Feltmakers' Company. In general, however, close co-operation existed between the master-hatter and the journeyman. The industry remained small, yet lucrative due to its monopoly position; and the master and journeyman existed in a mutually beneficial relationship. A high piece rate list discouraged the journeymen from striking for higher wages, but at the same time granted them concessions by restricting the employment of "non-freemen" or foreigners, limiting the number of apprentices to two, and prohibiting the use of indirect employment, or "putting out".

The growth of the industry in the early eighteenth century placed increasing strain upon the existing guild relationship in London. The influx of foreign hatters into the suburbs beyond the jurisdiction of the London livery company prevented the Feltmakers from controlling the trade. A national organization with an identification card for members was in place by at least 1771.

The further expansion of both the European and colonial markets during the Industrial Revolution

In seventeenth-century Europe hats moved down the social scale via the used clothes man.

By the late eighteenth century extravagance in hat styles was a favourite subject for caricaturists.

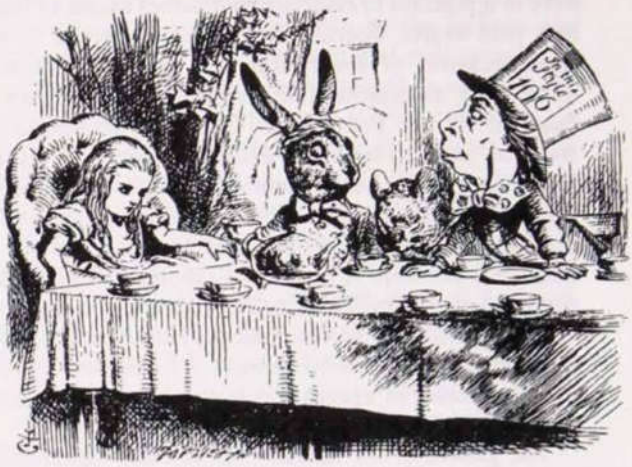
brought several changes, the most important being in the variety of hats produced. Quality depended primarily upon the type of fur used, and the growth in demand for cheaper hats brought attempts to economize on the use of beaver wool. From the earliest period, French hatters had distinguished between the castor (made exclusively from beaver), the demi-castor (a mixture of beaver with other fur), the dauphin (rabbit or camel hair, often on a wool body), and common (wool felt) hats. The search for alternatives to expensive North American beaver had resulted in the growing use of nutria, the South American variant of the otter. Domestic hare and coney fur were also in abundance, and while less susceptible to felting, were widely used in the production of cheaper hats.

In the English trades, three broad categories of hats evolved. The production of "cordies", or the basic grade of hat using coarse wool throughout, was largely confined to the country industry supplying the local market. The "plated" hat, made of a wool body and a fur veneer, was an eighteenth-century innovation originating in the northwest and its quality and price ranged with the amount and quality of fur used. "Tips" covered only the crown with a fur or camel hair veneer; "Naps"

had the crown, sides, and underbrim covered with fur; while the best plated hat completely covered a wool body with fur veneer. The difficulty in adhering fur to a wool body usually required that the plated hat had a longer, flowing nap which provided a less pleasing appearance. Finally, "stuff" hats used various grades of fur, and their quality depended upon the amount of beaver wool used. However, the old accounts of mixing three parts old coat to two parts parchment beaver (dried and stretched skins) no longer applied; now a body of cheaper fur was usually covered with an outer nap of precious beaver. Only the most expensive hats continued to use exclusively expensive beaver wool from North America.

The production of lesser quality hats encouraged the growth of a flourishing industry in Cheshire and Lancashire. The long history of a "country" industry had earned Stockport, Denton, Oldham and other towns in the vicinity of Manchester the reputation as "the great slaughter house district in the trade". Nonetheless, the major London houses — Christy's, Harris, Mayhew & White, Bowler & Bickerton, and China Bowler — began to shift production to the northwest to take advantage of the lower piece rates. The economies in labour were enough to offset the high cost of transporting materials and semi-finished hats between the northwest and the London market. As a result, cheaper semi-finished hat "forms" were produced in the northwest, with the more skilled "finishing" of hats remaining in London. By 1820, hat-making ranked second only to cotton spinning among manufacturing activities in Manchester.

Of particular importance in facilitating the use of cheaper grades of fur was the technological innovation of the mercury "carrot" introduced during the eighteenth century. As J. F. Crean explains, the surface of hair consists of a hard keratin substance not unlike that of a fingernail. Before furs like rabbit and coney can be rendered susceptible to felting some destruction of the keratin surface must occur. The solution developed for this purpose consisted of salts of mercury diluted in nitric acid. The immediate consequences of the mercury carrot for the Canadian fur trade is apparent: by improving the felting qualities of coney and rabbit, these domestic sources of fur became a much closer substitute for beaver. They produced a hat so close in quality to the expensive beaver that only a very experienced hand could differentiate between them. A description of the hat-making process in 1817 mentions the use of an ounce or two of beaver fur, but it was primarily restricted to the outside veneer. And this quantity was so little, that it had to be mixed with cotton so that there was sufficient material for the workman to handle. This was a far cry from the days when a single hat required the beaver wool from as many as two pelts.



Sir John Tenniel immortalized the "mad hatters" of England in his illustrations for Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland".

Of even greater significance was the impact of the mercury carrot on the journeyman hatter. The legendary "mad-hatter", far from being the product of Lewis Carroll's fertile imagination, is more rightly attributed to the deleterious effects of the mercury carrot. Martin Gardiner notes that the term "mad as a hatter" was common in the eighteenth century because hatters actually did go mad. The inhalation of fumes from the mercury used in treating fur resulted in the victim developing a tremor called "hatter's shakes", which affected the eyes and limbs and addled speech. In advanced stages they developed hallucinations and other psychotic symptoms. It was not until well into the twentieth century that the debilitating effects of mercury upon the hatter were properly diagnosed.

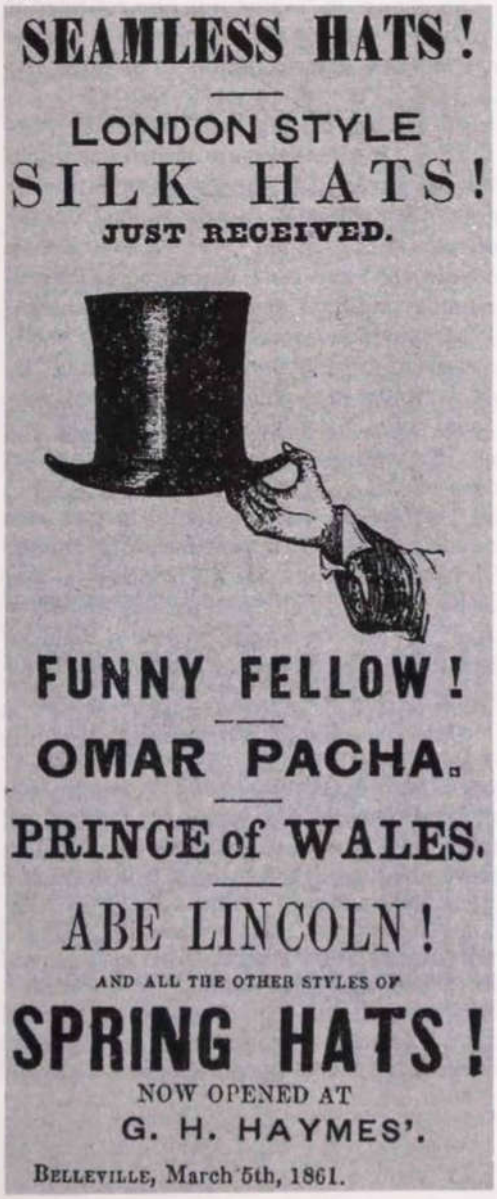
But industrial poisoning was only one of the concerns of the craftsmen by the 1830s, for fundamental changes in the organization of the trade had seriously encroached upon their economic position. The Lancashire industry had been based upon a "putting-out" or cottage system of production, with the journeyman hatter operating in a "planking room" attached to his home. However, factory production, first introduced as a means of reducing the theft of materials, was now being encouraged by attempts to cheapen costs through the use of child and female labour. The fragmentation of the work process permitted less skilled tasks such as lining and trimming, and the preparation stage to be separated out into lower-paying female work. Only the highly skilled tasks involved in the making of the felted hood, shaping and finishing remained in the traditional domain of male labour.

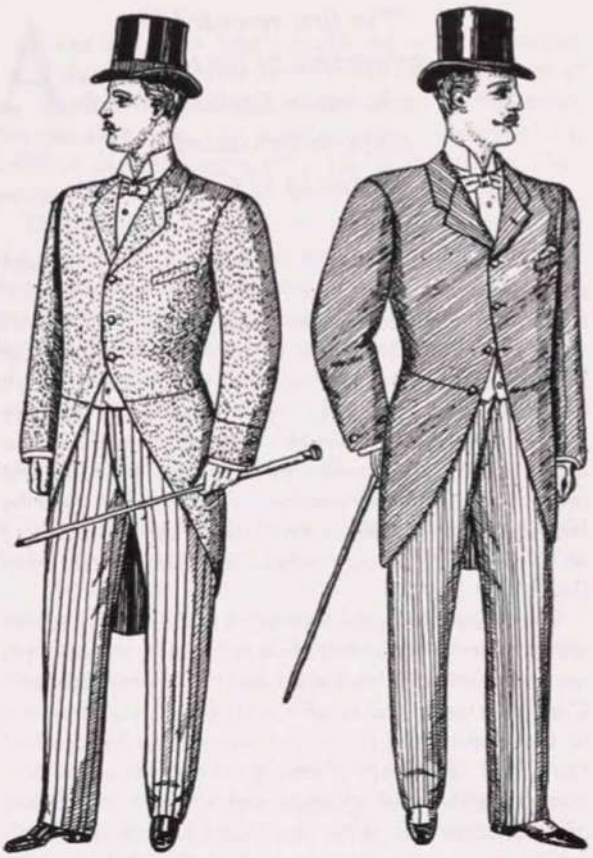
These changes did not occur without resistance, for the trade in the northwest also had a long history of union organization. The independent domestic hatter

— familiar with working a chosen number of hours in his own shop — brought these same traditions into the factory. One employer complained to his London associate that "I could not keep the finishers so close to it as I wished to, it being a kind of play week". Skilled workers in an old craft bound by custom and tradition had their own shop rules and forms of discipline — local "garrets" and "dozenings" resolved disputes among craftsmen. J. H. Smith provides us with the image of the "hatter at his plank, can of beer at his elbow, deep in discussion of political or trade questions with his plank mates . . ."

The rise of journeymen hatters to an organization of nationwide stature — madness notwithstanding — is a classic story in English labour history. Restrictions on the number of apprentices and the use of indirect

By the mid-nineteenth century every Canadian gentleman wore a silk hat, many named for popular figures of the time.





English men-about-town in morning coats and silk hats, late nineteenth century.

labour in the London area was no longer an effective restraint with competition from Cheshire and Lancashire. As the market differentiation between luxury and country production was obliterated, the cheaper labour supply of the northwest became of greater concern to the London workers. In response, the London-based union attempted to draw the Lancashire journeymen into a national organization so as to prevent the employment in the countryside of "foul" men who had achieved the position of journeyman without serving the formal seven year apprenticeship.

Successful strikes in 1768 and 1775, and hatters' congresses in 1772, 1775 and 1777, drew attention to the strength and level of sophistication attained by the journeymen's organizations. The Congresses passed several by-laws relating to the enforcement of hiring restrictions and levied fines and dues. The large hatting firms responded by petitioning to Parliament in 1777, claiming that in the past 25 years the trade "was much increased, and it has often wanted hands: That there had been a Combination among Journeymen" which had caused severe disruptions in production and driven up "the price of Labour".

"The first recorded appearance of the tall silk hat in England purportedly caused a riot in 1797"

Despite the fact that in the late 1790s Parliament declared "correspondence societies" to be illegal, organizations among journeymen persisted. Stockport was to become the centre of union activity and the frequency of violent confrontation increased as a severe decline in employment was experienced during the early 1800s. The firm of Christy's attempted to break the union during long strikes in 1833 and 1834, fought over the issue of the number of apprentices used by firms. One factory owner wrote that if apprentices were to be added "the men would tear them limb from limb".

The labour militancy witnessed in the hatting trades was not merely the result of skilled craftsmen attempting to resist the introduction of "sweat labour". Concentrated in the large working class communities of Lancashire and Cheshire, journeymen hatters had the added experience of seeing the erosion of the economic livelihood of spinners and weavers in the face of mechanization. With their long history of unionization, it is not surprising to find that hatters were over-represented among working-class leaders in areas such as Oldham between 1795 and 1830; and E.P. Thompson gives us evidence of hatters active in the Luddite movements of Halifax, Barnsley and York.

But the growing distress in the industry by the 1830s undermined the strength of union organizations. Fundamental changes in the industry had seriously encroached upon the position of both the felt-hat manufacturer and journeyman. In regard to their increasing redundancy, the demand for the journeyman hatter was to suffer a fate similar to that for the Canadian beaver.

Although French manufacturers virtually disappeared as a supplier of quality felt hats following the conquest of New France, revenge was quickly and decisively obtained: in less than 75 years the Parisian silk hat had virtually displaced the felted Beaver from the luxury European market.

The first recorded appearance of the tall silk hat in England purportedly caused a riot in 1797. Its bearer, a London haberdasher, was charged with "a breach of the peace for having appeared upon the Public Highway wearing upon his head a tall structure having a shiny lustre and calculated to frighten timid people". Despite its shinier gloss, the early silk hat was seen as inferior: a woven English plush on a heavy, felted wool body giving an undesired long-napped finish and a clumsy appearance. It was not until the French Lyon plush was added to a body made from layers of muslin steeped in shellac, that the silk hat took on a lighter, sharper finish. Once these adaptations were in place, the silk hat became the headdress of the aspiring middle class. It was comparable in price to stuff hats of medium quality (18 or 19 shillings), and much cheaper than the finest beaver hats selling for more than 32 shillings. Moreover, urbanization combined with travel by closed coaches — either by stage, private carriage or railway — lessened one's exposure to the elements. In so doing it weakened the hold of the felt hat, whose qualities of durability and hardness became "old fashioned" and a symbol of "rusticity".

The market for the expensive beaver hat was getting squeezed between the popularity of cheap soft felts in rural areas, and by the silk hat in urban markets. As stuff hats declined in popularity, their price also fell. By 1848, a beaver hat was selling for as little as 12 shillings. This change in fashion was also reflected in the price of beaver wool which had risen to as high as 23 shillings in 1843, only to tumble to as little as 8 shillings in 1846.

Established English hatting firms made the transition by shifting a substantial share of their operations towards silk hat production. The same was untrue for the journeyman felt hatter. With competition from silk hats, piece rates in the felt hat trade were cut almost in half between 1835 and 1844. Moreover, unfettered by strong union traditions and thus largely unregulated, silk hat production evolved on a "slop shop" basis of cheap, unskilled labour. Deemed as "foul" by felt hatters, it is alleged that many unemployed journeymen would not even consider making the "rag and resin" hat, for which they had a long-standing contempt.

By 1860, the felt hat trade enjoyed a revival with the rise to fashion of the low crowned, wide brim hats: the soft felt hat — the trilby and the homburg — was an adaptation of the formerly unfashionable country "wideawake", so titled by *Punch* because it "had no nap"; while the stiffer bowler or paxton took hold among more fashionable urban folk. A form of peaceful co-existence had been forged with the silk hat, which was largely restricted to more formal costume. Yet this revival came too late to rescue the beaver felt. Again copying French trends, hats were made from new superfine felts from fur other than beaver. The foreign beaver had been largely supplanted by the domestic hare. ◆

Hugh Grant is Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Winnipeg.

Trader, Tripper, Trapper

By Sydney A. Keighley

with Renée Fossett Jones
and David K. Riddle

Sydney Augustus Keighley joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1917 at the age of seventeen. He served at Cedar Lake, Onion Lake, Montreal Lake, La Ronge and Stanley as a clerk apprentice, and at Stanley, Poor Fish Lake, Big Trout Lake, Caribou and Portage la Loche as post manager. After leaving the Company in 1938 he was an independent fur trader and retail outlet owner-manager until his retirement in 1968.

Throughout his 52 years in the fur trade he was a keen observer of native life and of the role of the fur-trade companies in twentieth-century northern history. His memoirs, *Trader, Tripper, Trapper: The Life of a Bay Man,* prepared with the assistance of Renée Fossett Jones and David K. Riddle, are soon to be published by Watson and Dwyer Publishing Ltd. and the Rupert's Land Research Centre, University of Winnipeg.

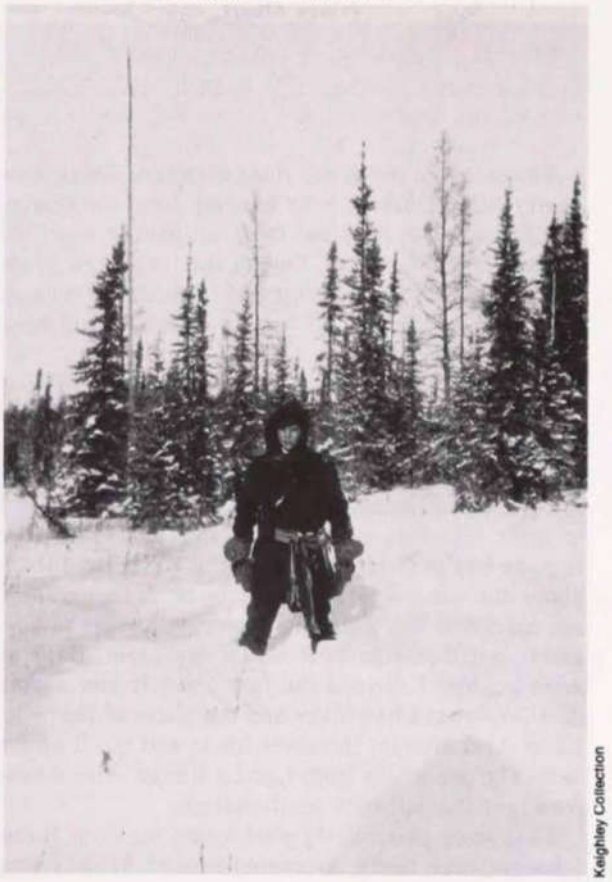
In 1923, Keighley became post manager at Stanley Mission on the Churchill River. The following excerpt from the book details the annual rounds of the Indian trappers and of Keighley himself as he conducted the "camp trade". The photographs were taken by Keighley on his many canoe and dogteam trips through the bush country.

After the New Year's gathering and the parties, dances, and other celebrations, the people would pitch back to their remote camps by dog team. No one ever rode, just plodded along on snow shoes, children and old people alike, taking their time. They would then trap and hunt until the Easter gathering.

These people were very religious and the rituals of the church at Christmas, New Year's and Easter were important to them. At their camps they always had prayers before retiring and again in the morning before breakfast. The Easter gathering was practically a repeat of the New Year's gathering except that it was shorter, owing to the risk of an early thaw.

The story of Abel McKenzie will illustrate how trusting and honest these people were. My travelling companion, Charlie Cook, and I went up the Churchill River to supply some Indian camps near Fine Cloth Lake. En route, we fetched up at Abel's camp, some two days' travel from Stanley, and found no one at home. Abel had left a note written in syllabics to let us know that he and his group had pitched off to hunt beaver about one boiling (half a day) distance.

The young Sydney Keighley on the trail.



Keighley Collection

The unlocked cabin was filled with furs. There were nearly 1,000 muskrat pelts hanging from the ceiling, and foxes, mink, lynx and otter, all packed in an old trunk and several boxes. One of the furs was a beautiful silver fox worth at least $450. There was no kind of security system at all. Any passer-by could have helped himself.

After boiling the kettle, we closed the cabin door behind us and followed Abel's trail. We found him with his family, living in a teepee, with a growing pile of beaver pelts. Abel and I "traded". That is, he told me to go back by his shack and to take half the furs to settle his account with me. The other half of the furs, he had to give to the opposition as he owed them about the same amount as he owed us, somewhere around $400. The silver fox, however, he was saving, and asked that I leave it out of my count. Back at Abel's cabin, I divided the furs and left him a note detailing what I had taken and the prices of the pelts. Later Abel brought the silver fox in and put it up for bids. The opposition from Lac La Ronge, Alec Ahenikew, got the pelt by a small margin.

That was a particularly good season for silver foxes. I bought over thirty, averaging around $250. Prices for other furs were still down after the 1920 fur market crash.

After the Easter gathering we tripped by dog team until the ice got too weak for travel and as soon as we had partly open water we tripped by canoe, which was tough work with portages long and short wherever we went. An eighteen-foot freighter canoe could carry around 1,200 pounds, while a nineteen-footer carried about 1,600 pounds. That adds up to a lot of unloading, packing and reloading at the portages. In the sixty miles to Burntwood Lake, the waterway was broken by fourteen portages before arriving at the first Indian camp. Spring hunting was strictly for beaver and muskrat. Trapping went on till the first week in June usually, and then the leaves began to bud and the Indians started gathering at prearranged points from whence they pitched into Stanley by canoe. Many birchbark canoes were still in use, and they were always made by the husband and wife who owned them. It was the husband's job to prepare the wood and build the frame. The wife sewed the birch covering together with babiche, and then made a waterproof seam sealer from spruce gum. Collecting spruce gum from the bush in early spring was a family effort. The gum was boiled

in a frying pan along with some lard, and the resulting paste was painted over all the seams. A man and wife team could make a canoe in just a few days. When the Indians worked, they worked steadily. If there was a job to do, there was no stopping for coffee breaks, and no one was thinking about "working 9 to 5". It was simply carry on at the job until it was done, day and night. When a canoe was torn by ice or rocks, repairs were made by cooking up a bit of spruce gum and lard paste, and painting it over the rips. In 1980, I visited Stanley, and saw old Benji Ross making a birchbark canoe in the old fashion.

Convoys of as many as thirty canoes began coming into the posts at the end of June. As they came in sight of the post and settlement, there would be a firing of guns, and shouting between canoes, and from canoe to settlement.

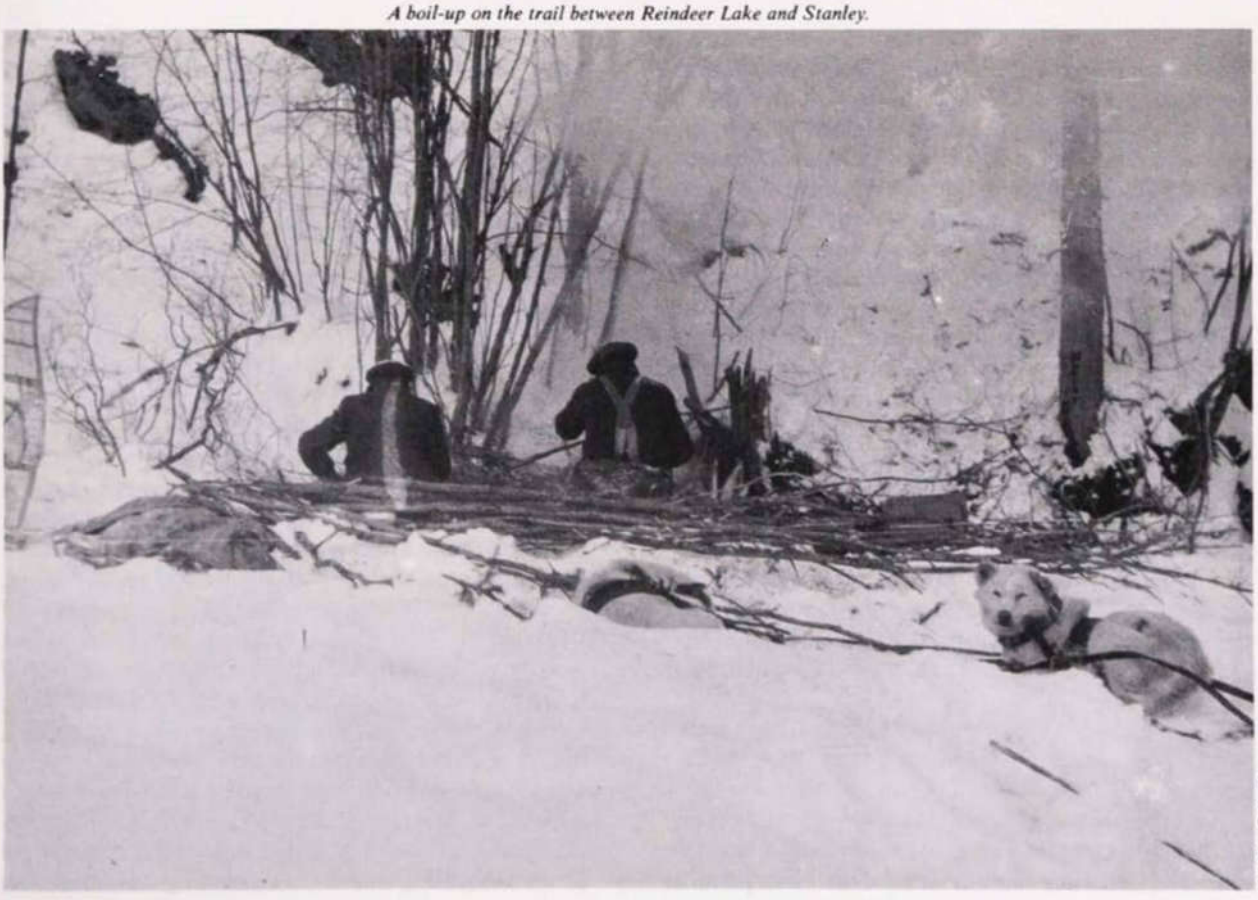
Though great travellers and trippers within their own area, the Stanley Indians seldom went anywhere else. The only strangers they met were those like myself who came to live amongst them, and occasional tourists. They married within the group, and this led to much inter-breeding. There were marriages between cousins, with uncles and aunts, and with other relatives, although never between brother and sister. In spite of the close relationships, they were a very healthy bunch and full of energy.

Archdeacon [J.A.] Mackay was convinced that by the 1920s, when I knew these people, that there were very few, if any, pure Cree left. They were all, to one degree or another, Métis, or mixed-blood. After the Archdeacon had pointed it out to me, I noted that the older Indians who had few, or no, white ancestors, were practically hairless as far as body hair was concerned. Increasing amounts of body hair seemed to indicate larger numbers of white ancestors.

A family of Chipewyans with the surname of Rat, lived with the Stanley Cree at that time. They had moved into the area to trap and were completely accepted by the local Cree. When the parents died, the three children, William, Norman, and Mary Anne, were taken in by the Cree. I believe they were pure Chipewyan. The children seemed much less hardy than the local people, possibly due to living in overheated log cabins rather than in tents as they did previously.

The people throughout this area — Stanley, Montreal Lake, Lac La Ronge and Pelican Narrows — were natural traditionalists. They liked to stick to the

A boil-up on the trail between Reindeer Lake and Stanley.



Keighley Collection

Some of the author's in-laws, the McKenzies, camping at Burntwood Lake.

old ways of doing things. Many preferred the old muzzle-loader to any other kind of firearm. We had to keep large stocks of shot, kegs of black powder, and gun caps, and always had a powder house safely separated from the other buildings. We still handled the old duffle capote, a wrap-around hooded parka, held at the waist with a cinch *L'Assomption* sash of brightly coloured wool. Most of the men carried fire bags, in which they kept plug tobacco, a pipe, a pocket knife, and a piece of flint imported from England, and birch punk. With the punk in the palm of the hand, they would strike the flint with the jacknife blade, blowing on the spark until they had it glowing. This method would light pipe or camp fire. In those days, practically all Indian men, women and children smoked pipes. The pipes were store-bought, usually, but in an emergency any Indian could make one out of reeds or bulrushes. The pipestem was a long, slender piece of reed, and the bowl was a wider piece, cut about two inches long, and with pulp and fibre left in the bottom end. These homemade pipes were more than adequate, and completely free.

Treaty at that time was paid at Stanley in July but it did not amount to much, as there were just 250 Indians. The amount paid would not have exceeded $1,300 and this was spent all in a day. Treaty money came from the government, so the people did not consider that it had any value in terms of their own personal work, and it wasn't thought of as part of primary income. It was simply something extra, a present. When the men collected their family's treaty money, they handed it over to their wives on the spot, and the women shopped. The store stayed open night and day as long as the shoppers wanted it to. We always had a twenty-five percent discount on all goods at treaty time.

This apparent lack of concern for money is deceptive. Although the people did not take treaty money seriously, they were in fact an extremely thrifty, financially competent group. What they understood was the value of the credit they built up through their work. They were very prudent when they came to spend this. When they purchased goods, they used a list which had been carefully thought out beforehand, checked everything as it was put on the counter, and sometimes returned items after reconsidering their choices. In these instances, the men did the bulk of the shopping, choosing first those goods necessary for hunting and trapping and food staples for the camps. The women would then be asked to indicate what they needed, and these purchases would be approved by the husband. This may sound as if the men dominated their families, but in fact they were extremely generous once the necessities of life had been paid for, and shopping was a family occasion. For the clerks at the post, the outfitting of a large family with a substantial credit could be an exhausting and time consuming adventure. As

for the family, everybody got a share, and everybody had a great time.

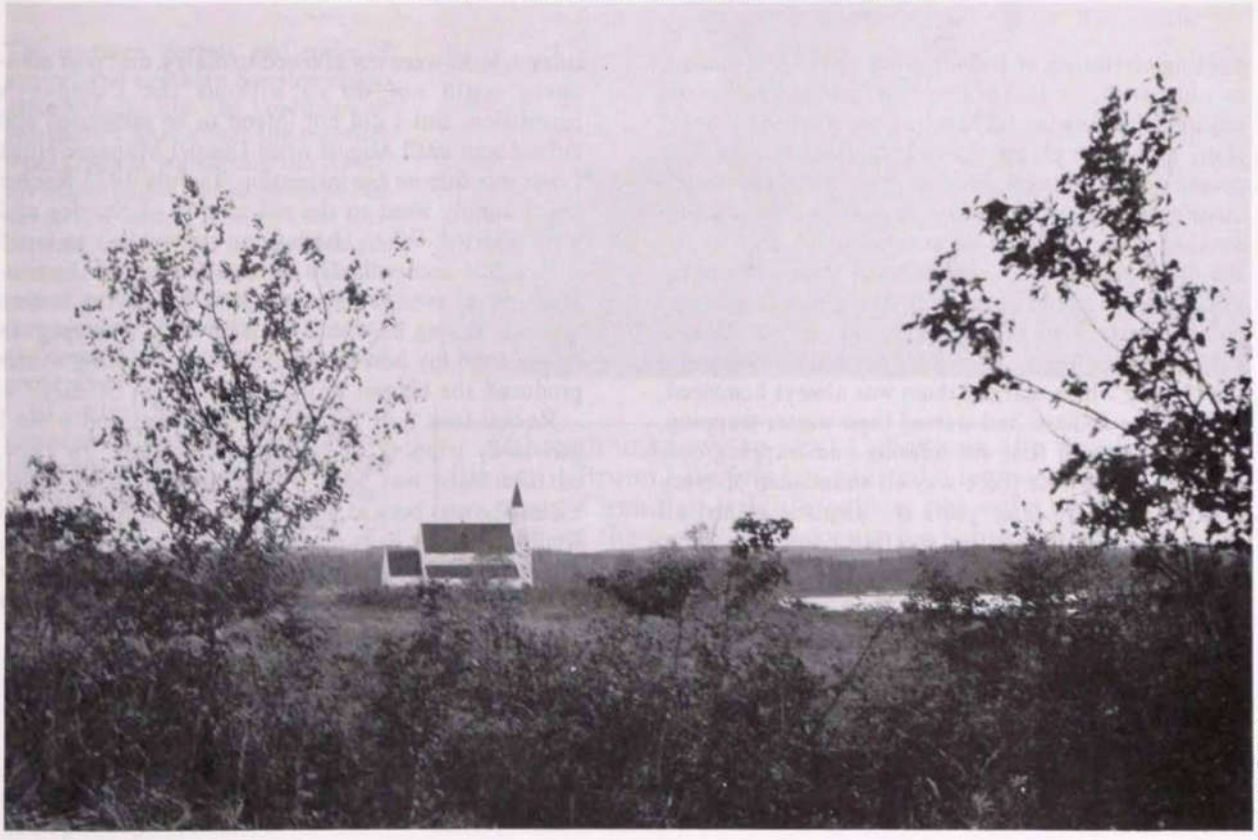
Of course, store-bought goods formed only a portion of what they used. Most of what they needed was available for the taking if they were willing to work. For instance, they could make their own canoes, toboggans, cabins, teepees, clothes, and furniture from materials that were readily available in the bush. Nearly all their food they could come by in the same manner. Like their ancestors before the arrival of the white man, they could provide entirely for themselves. About all they really wanted from the trading posts were more efficient tools to use in providing for themselves, and a few luxuries.

All in all they were the most thrifty of all the natives I ever dealt with. Besides the winter trapping, which provided most of the family's credit at the post, most families had income from the sale of moccasins and birchbark rogans which the women made. Rogans were baskets with lids, in assorted sizes and usually embroidered and trimmed with coloured porcupine quills. These were popular as tourist items and the women made a few extra dollars from this craft.

Summer in the northern settlements was a festival time for most of the Indians. They came to the settlement to get their treaty money, and the square dances and jigs went on night after night, until daylight, which came pretty early in the North. Various men would volunteer to go hunting, and would bring back meat for the entire village. I was always included and received my share just like everyone else. I felt that I was really one of them and they treated me that way. Most of the older people called me *Noo-sa-sim*, my grandchild. Whenever I was tripping, there were young lads who volunteered to go with me as helper and companion, with no thought of being paid except in food, just as if I was a brother or cousin. At many of the camps the women would have their daughters bead articles for us — leg bands, arm bands, hat bands, and belts. At the end of a trip we would put our fancy decorations on before going into the settlement and our finery was an indication of our popularity. I must say sometimes I looked pretty fancy when I came back to town.

In late August or September the Indians returned to their hunting grounds for the winter. I have said that the small family groups left their own territories to meet with larger groups to form convoys into the settlement, and it is true that each family group had its own winter camp. I never could see any evidence however of there being strict boundaries between the

The church at Stanley Mission with the newly repaired and shortened steeple, 1922.



Keighley Collection

Wilson Brown

The author at home in Winnipeg in 1988, his eighty-eighth year.

hunting territories of the various groups. Any Indian, or white man, for that matter, was free to hunt moose anywhere. Likewise there was no notion of "ownership" about the places where traplines were set. The people set their traps near, around, and across each other's, each knowing his own traps and never touching another person's. They all seemed to be able to tell the difference between one person's traps and another's, and they would notice if anything was caught and pass a message to the owner to that effect. Beaver lodges were different. They were personally owned and the blazing which marked them was always honoured.

After the Indians had started their winter trapping, we had plenty of time for hunting and trapping ourselves. At that time there was an abundance of every kind of game. In later years the airplane ruined all this by making it easy for sporting hunters to come into the country. I believe they were the cause of the depletion of many animals in areas where the Indians had lived for centuries and never suffered from scarcity of game.

Although my life seemed full with my work and bush activities, I realized I was lonely and wanted a close companion. I had made up my mind to marry a young Cree woman, Rachel McKenzie, and in doing so, I broke one of the Hudson's Bay Company's strict rules. Clerks were not allowed to marry, and post managers could not do so without the Company's permission. But I did not intend to be dissuaded and did not wait until August when District Manager Hugh Conn was due on his inspection. In July 1923 Rachel and I simply went to the old church at Stanley and were married. When Hugh Conn arrived he was faced with a *fait accompli*. He instantly accepted the situation, never even reprimanding me for having broken the rule, saying he would fix it up with Winnipeg. In return I did my best for him, and the following winter produced the biggest profit ever made at Stanley.

Rachel took over the household chores and when I was away tripping, she managed the store. In 1924, our first baby was born, a little girl whom we called Elsie. She was born at home, delivered by Mrs. Harold Kemp. The poor baby died of pneumonia the next year, which was a hard blow for me. She is buried in the churchyard of Stanley's beautiful old church. ♦

Painter of the Wild

By Clarence Tillenius

BRUNO LILJEFORS, THE PEERLESS EYE
By Martha Hill. Allen Publishing, Kingston-Upon-Hull, England, 1987. 174 pp., illus. $60.00.

IN THE REALM OF THE WILD
The Art of Bruno Liljefors of Sweden
Exhibition catalogue, The American Museum of Natural History, New York; The Bell Museum of Natural History, Minneapolis; the Göteborg Art Gallery, Göteborg, Sweden. 87 pp., illus.

Although unknown to most Canadians, the Swedish wildlife artist Bruno Liljefors has exerted a tremendous influence on many Canadian wildlife artists, not only because of his mastery of the genre, but because his subject matter and the landscape that he worked in is so similar to that encountered by Canadian nature artists.

One of the Canadian artists who acknowledges a great debt to the Swedish master is Western wildlife artist Clarence Tillenius, a contributor to *The Beaver* for over 40 years, who writes here of two recent publications concerning Bruno Liljefors, one a major study of the artist's life and work and the other the catalogue of the first major exhibition of his work to be seen in North America.

The marshes, forests and rocks of central and northern Sweden are so astonishingly like the landscape of Northern Canada that the traveller from Canada wandering the Swedish woods might almost think he had never left home. The moose, timberwolf, brown bear and red fox are common to both countries: Canada geese, introduced in southern Sweden around the turn of the century are now almost the commonest wild goose seen there.

In central Sweden — this environment so like the Canadian Precambrian shield — a hundred and twenty-eight years ago the man was born who would one day be acclaimed by his brother artists as the greatest interpreter of wild animals and wilderness known to the western world.

He was Bruno Liljefors, born in Uppsala in 1860; when he died in 1939 he left a legacy of paintings incomparably the finest interpretations of wilderness and its dwellers that nature and art lovers have yet been privileged to see.

Bruno Liljefors, Eagle Owl in Snow Covered Trees, 1907, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede, Holland.

Though Liljefors was a household word in Sweden throughout his lifetime ("the artist beloved of Swedes everywhere") and his works renowned not only in his homeland of Scandinavia but in Germany, Holland, and England, yet his work except for a few enthusiasts was comparatively unknown in North America. Now for the first time ever an exhibition of some 60-odd of his works, organized by Dr. Björn Fredlund, Director of the Art Gallery of Göteborg, Sweden, is on tour in the United States, opening first in New York and now in Minneapolis where it will be on view until 31 December 1988.

One individual who worked tirelessly for years to foster the project of bringing these Liljefors paintings to North America is Martha Hill of New York, author and picture editor of *Audubon Magazine*. She has now produced the largest, most extensive work on the artist yet published in English.

This large book, profusely illustrated with reproductions of Liljefors' paintings, for the most part excellent in colour, is undoubtedly the best and most comprehensive presentation (in English) now available of the work of this great master.

What is unique about this volume is that author Martha Hill neither reads nor speaks Swedish so that in large part the text of the book is drawn from translations of the volumes cited below, augmented by her own first-hand impressions gained by visits to the galleries housing the great collections of Liljefors' works. As well, several members of the Liljefors family added their reminiscences and I myself put at her disposal my own collection of 50-years-gathering of Liljefors biographical and other memorabilia: in addition translating for her the memoirs and reminiscences of many of Liljefors' friends and contemporaries currently hidden in obscure volumes and also in my own journals of several decades back.

There are a few, a very few, errors of nomenclature — unavoidable where various translators of greater or lesser merit must be depended on — but in the main this is a book which for the first time makes available to Canadians (and other English-speaking readers) a comprehensive overview of the life and art of this great interpreter of the wild.

I should add that from the 1880s onward, there exist numberless essays, interviews and articles on art in which Liljefors' works are discussed, praised, analyzed and compared with the "mainstream of art" current in his time: his art remains a milestone in the art movements of his age: but, as interpretations of the living wilderness, in my view they are timeless.

For Bruno Liljefors was primarily, and before all else, an artist great in every sense of the word: his ability to evoke with paint, with brush, pencil or pen the mystery and the thousand varying moods of forest, marsh, or open sea will neither be

equalled nor duplicated for the circumstances and the environment that nurtured his genius will never return.

Liljefors, himself an avid hunter throughout his younger years, said in his old age, "The gun of the future will be the camera". These were prophetic words, and though he foresaw the rising tide of nature photography, he could hardly have foreseen the burgeoning thousands of "wildlife artists" whose productions could never have existed without the photographs and colour slides from which their paintings are so carefully copied.

Though photography in the 1860s was only in its early infancy, the possibilities of the camera for studying the mechanics of movement in animals as well as humans were quickly apparent to Liljefors. He made good use of this tool in his own intensive study of animal movement and how it ought to be interpreted in producing the *illusions* that art demands. Many have tried to copy his style and even his compositions but without his years of intensive study and analysis of the mechanics of flight such copies can never duplicate these masterpieces.

Very unusual, too, is Liljefors' remarkable ability to picture in words the characteristic sequences of bird or animal movement so that the reader can form an exact picture in his mind of what Liljefors is describing.

Here, for instance, is his analysis of a woodpecker ascending a tree-trunk: "it is not a question of simply 'hopping' up the tree trunk: no, the small powerful legs and feet with claws firmly hooked in the bark together with the stiff tail-feathers make a triangular base, from which the woodpecker drives upward by throwing his heavy head forward and letting the body follow. A fresh grip of claws and tail and the head is drawn backwards and again thrown forward: and so in a smooth rhythm he travels up the tree".

Remember this was long before the era of slow-motion movies. Here we are shown the analysis of a dedicated observer. Liljefors regards with scientific detachment the living animals that in his wonderful paintings move with such a startling illusion that one must sometimes look again to be convinced that they *are* indeed painted and not flesh and blood.

Bruno Liljefors, Foxes, 1886, oil on canvas, Goteborg Konstmusem.

Because the paintings of Liljefors are so compelling let us stop for a moment in front of his painting of a flock of wild geese coming in to land and recall his description of the landing of such a flock, in paintings like: "Autumn Migration, Bean Geese" and "Settling Wild Geese". Here are his comments:

> Wind plays an important role for waterfowl. When a flock stands resting, each bird faces directly into the wind which slides harmlessly over the shingle-laid feathers, so that the bird is actually standing in a calm.
>
> They turn straight into the wind whether for flying up or coming down, and the larger species, like swans or geese, must run a hundred metres or so, sometimes with outspread feet pattering over the water surface before there can be a question of altering direction. Facing with outspread wings into the wind, it acts like a wedge which drives under and lifts them from the water or the land. This "wedge" they also require in order calmly and correctly to land.
>
> Should a goose flock attempt to settle to earth without regard to wind direction, they would roll over each other like so many knapsacks, smash into each other and into the ground. Their landing technique is in fact as detailed and important as a steamer's being manoeuvred into a dock.
>
> When a flock decides to land, which is invariably only in open terrain where from afar they can detect any lurking ambush, they first drop with cupped wings down from the heights, check themselves when near the ground, circling a few times like a long serpent or millipede while determining the spot for landing. The landing-spot chosen, the flock descends obliquely down against the wind, without a wing-beat but with constant adjustments and steering with wing and tail-feathers, the whole phalanx as taunt and tense as a slender construction of iron or steel . . . at the last instant the heavy bodies check and lift with a couple of wing beats, the outstretched feet touch the earth with elastic tread and the geese stand there as calm as statues.

It is this fantastic power to observe objectively and portray so vividly the life of the wild that makes Liljefors' work so irresistible to all lovers of nature and wilderness. Yet quite possibly none but those who themselves have spent long periods observing the wilderness creatures can appreciate to the full the extraordinary impact of these Liljefors paintings.

For instance there was formerly in a museum of Dresden, Germany, a Liljefors canvas titled "Fox Seizing Hare". In this canvas a fox has just captured a white winter hare (similar to our white-tailed Jackrabbit). The fox's jaws have closed on the hare's neck and the hare's hind leg is outstretched with every toe spread wide in the spasmodic, quivering shudder characteristic of the instant of death.

Having been myself — like most of my boyhood companions of those early days on a backwoods homestead — an avid hunter and trapper with many opportunities to see the interplay of wild animals such as woodchuck caught by fox, snowshoe rabbit by coyote, or ruffed grouse seized by goshawk, these episodes portrayed on canvas by Liljefors ring with absolute truth.

For a more powerful drama still, we have the "Greyhen Seized by a Marten" so astonishing a composition it seems impossible for Liljefors not to have been an actual eyewitness of the event.

Of this particular canvas, and another larger one of similar theme, Bruno's son Lindorm once told me of coming upon a capercailzie cock lying with outstretched wings in a waterfilled ditch. Though dead, the body was still warm and when Lindorm examined it he found its head and throat scarred by newly-inflicted bites by, as he surmised, a marten. As Lindorn reconstructed the event, the grouse could have been attacked up in a tree by the marten and when it received the death-bite would have plummeted to earth: the marten either relinquishing his hold when the bird fell or — if he hung on — would have crashed into the water-filled ditch from which he was unable to drag the heavy body.

The execution of both these paintings is masterly: the impact of the scene being enacted is so overpowering one only slowly becomes aware what a *tour-de-force* of artistic inspiration the composition and brushwork of this painting reveals.

But the immensely dramatic canvas from the Bohuslän's Museum in Uddevalla "End of the Hunt" of two hounds killing a fox, though certainly not a subject for the faint-hearted is so powerful both in concept and execution that it demands a further artistic analysis. The unusual concept, with the massed bodies of hounds and fox forming a massive curving diagonal coming down from the upper right, it is at the same time a powerful abstract pattern.

The colour scheme is both subtle and memorable, the ochres, grey and buff of the grassy hillside a har-

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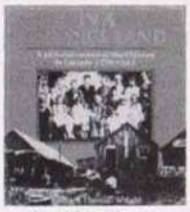

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monic complementary to the fox's rich rusty orange and the white and glossy black of the pursuing hounds. Into this blending of black with the colours of autumn, Liljefors has struck in seven distinct and differing shapes of white: the white jaws of the fox, the throat, foreleg and tail of the foremost hound, the fox's tail tip and the forehead blaze and mane of the second hound.

Now this painting, though picturing a situation of almost shocking realism, is nevertheless from an artist's point of view, an abstract composition of tremendous power. This is because Liljefors, regardless of what subject he chooses as theme, is supremely an artist: recognized and acclaimed as such by his peers in the European art scene. To confirm this we have only to remember that in the great 1892 exhibition in Munich he was awarded the gold medal in competition with artists of all callings and *not* for an animal painting, but for his famed canvas "The Capercailzie Hunter" subsequently owned by Prince Carl of Sweden.

This award, let us remember, was at a time when artistic concept and technique mastery were held to be of supreme importance. Yet as one of Liljefors' biographers, Dr. K. E. Russow, has remarked, even today when self-expression is looked on as a paramount quality in art, this painting continues to grip the spectator by its powerful evocation of the mood of the forest interior, the silent hunter at one with the shadowy tree trunks and the sombre twilight. So, whether it be labelled realism, impressionism, post-impressionism or expressionism does not matter: it is *art*, and art of a high order.

Dr. Björn Fredlund, director of the Göteborg Art Gallery, who assembled the exhibition for Minneapolis (as well as for New York) told me he regretted not being able to include some of Liljefors' largest paintings such as "The Wave", a 16-foot masterpiece of a flock of migrating eiders speeding over the crest of a massive green wave. However, in the exhibition is the small preliminary colour study in which one can see the artist's initial composition for the finished masterwork.

Author Martha Hill, in the preface to "Bruno Liljefors, The Peerless Eye", says of this painting which hangs in Thiels' Gallery, Stockholm: "Upon opening the heavy main door, the visitor ascends a broad, dark wood staircase leading to the skylighted main galleries. Halfway up, he is distracted by a flash of white from the side. Turning to confront a sixteen-foot-long canvas on the opposite wall, he sees forty eiders, life-size, whirring across the wintry sea, their blurred wings riffling the trough of a wave. The black-green sea is chilling, and so is the sensation of wind. The impact of this monumental vision leaves the onlooker breathless as he surveys the phalanx of the birds flying past, finally noticing the few brown females which at first were eclipsed by the dazzling nuptial plumage of the drakes. This feeling of sudden encounter, of witnessing an event in

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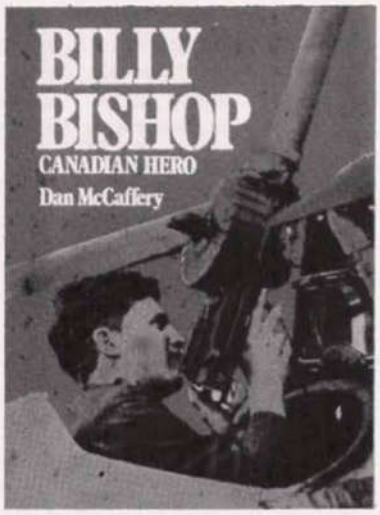
Billy Bishop: The real story



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nature, without intruding — this is the imcomparable art of Bruno Liljefors".

These monumental canvases by Liljefors are breathtaking. On one of our many visits to Sweden, Fru Kraka Lundegårdh, Liljefors' daughter, very graciously took us on a tour of many large buildings (including the university) in the city of Uppsala. Two of the great Liljefors canvases hanging there are paintings of swans in migration. The largest canvas — nearly 20 feet long! — one sees at the end of a large hall from a hanging balcony and over the heads of the people below. Again, the effect is awe-inspiring.

At the Minneapolis exhibition is a display case with three books: two by Liljefors himself, the third a collection of caricatures done by him in the early eighties. These were perhaps the first true comic drawings published in Sweden and they reveal better than any other work the gentle humour and lively sense of the ridiculous that was so marked a characteristic of Liljefors and one hugely appreciated by his friends. This facet of Liljefors' personality may come as a surprise to those admirers of his art familiar only with his monumental landscapes of surging sea or sombre forest. They might in such case be reminded that the friends of Michelangelo referred to him as "that delightful raconteur and prince of good fellows" — the words of both his colleagues sculptor Benvenuto Cellini and art historian Vasari. This may be difficult to reconcile with the sublime serenity of the "Pieta" in the Vatican or the awesome grandeur of the Sistine Chapel but the fact remains that among his cronies Michelangelo was beloved as a sunny-natured comrade with irresistible wit and a fund of droll anecdotes. Of Liljefors too, his friend Carl Larsson (another of Sweden's "Big Three", the third was Anders Zorn) said: "Bruno as a story-teller was truly life-endangering: he could make us laugh until we rolled on the ground and begged for mercy, and still he kept on until we were entirely prostrate and helpless".

As a young art student more than 60 years ago my first encounter with Liljefors' art was a small black and white reproduction in a magazine: with that first glimpse I was enchanted, and have been so with Liljefors ever since. Unfortunately for Canadians, a great deal of what has been written about Liljefors is printed in Swedish. Liljefors' work was first available to a larger public in a set of 4 large portfolios of 5 reproductions in each (20 paintings in all) and published in 1891 under the title *From Forest and Field*. This I obtained as a young art student from an antikvariat in Stockholm: in 1912 a second large volume of 33 reproductions in colour of his paintings was published with the title: *Out in the Field*.

In 1929 Dr. K. E. Russow published *Bruno Liljefors, an Appreciation*, a large biography in Swedish and English with some 90-odd reproductions, and in 1934 Liljefors himself wrote a series of reminiscences published (with many paintings) under the title *The Realm of the Wild*.

In 1960 the art historian, author and art critic Dr. Bo Lindwall, together with Liljefors' son Lindorm published an excellent biography (in Swedish) of the artist. He not long ago wrote me that when he and his brother were boys they spent their summers in the same rocky islands of the Swedish archipelago where so many of Liljefors' masterpieces were painted: and added that in those years the walls of their rooms were covered with colour reproductions of Liljefors paintings torn from the richly illustrated Christmas annuals so popular in Sweden from the 1890s onward. These pictures, he remarked candidly, he vainly tried to copy in watercolour but confessed sadly: "Try as I might, they did *not* come out looking like Liljefors' ".

In 1981 the noted art historian Dr. Allan Ellenius of the University of Uppsala published a comprehensive illustrated monograph of Liljefors and his art in which he makes many penetrating and shrewd comments on Liljefors' art and its significance to the European art movements of his time. This is a most interesting and painstaking analysis both of the philosophical and cultural climate of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and will repay careful study by the earnest scholar. Unfortunately, the book is only available in Swedish so until Professor Ellenius publishes an English version (he is fluent in both) it remains a source only available to those bilingual in Swedish and English.

Coincidentally with arranging the Liljefors' exhibitions coming to America, the Göteborg Art Gallery has produced an excellent colour catalogue *In the Realm of the Wild*, with additional extensive essays by Dr. Pontus Grate, art historian and director of the National Museum in Stockholm, Professor Allan Ellenius, art critic, author and director of the Department of Art History at the University of Uppsala, and Dr. Björn Fredlund, director of the

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This is truly a catalogue to own: the colour reproductions are excellent and numerous (every work in the show is included) and since the authors are completely fluent in English and Swedish, the literary quality of the text is assured. Though it is my hope that all seekers after excellence in the arts — seeking as well a remarkable insight into the wild — will visit the Bruno Liljefors' exhibitions in person and see at first hand how a truly great artist portrays his feeling for the wilderness and its creatures, these two publications are truly the next best choice.

Whoever now takes the opportunity to possess himself or herself of these two fine volumes will own the very best presentation now available in English of this great master of wilderness painting.

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People in History

By J.M. Bumsted

Despite the best efforts of some academic historians to obfuscate the fact, people remain an essential ingredient of good historical writing. Without the leaven of individual lives and personalities, whether of traditional superstars or ordinary folk, history as a written art loses much of its interest. A sampling from the present mailbag of books for review illustrates how many different ways there are to approach people in history, all of them valid and each of them capable of excellence. Regrettably, not every author or editor can make a genre work well.

Joe C. W. Armstrong's *Champlain* exemplifies that most traditional form, the "Great Man Biography". The author deliberately sets out to present his subject as a "great heroic figure" within the "great historical tradition" (p. xv) and in his preface he takes some potshots at some "more fashionable concepts", particularly recent attempts to "trivialize" Champlain's accomplishments. In his text, Armstrong does succeed in reminding his readers that Champlain was a figure of considerable breadth of accomplishment and vision. He was a decent cartographer and illustrator, a brilliant (and tenacious) publicist and promoter, a useful journalist. Whether he was equally skilled as an ethnographer or fur-trade diplomatist is another matter. It is interesting that the book's dustjacket quotes Marcel Trudel in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* rather than Armstrong on the centrality of Champlain to the beginnings of Canada.

Readers unfamiliar with Champlain or the early history of New France will find much useful information in this biography. Armstrong writes in a serviceable but unevocative prose style that sticks close to "the facts", chiefly as presented in his subject's own writings. He makes no attempt to penetrate beneath the surface of Champlain's life or art, and perhaps more significantly, provides little or no context for Champlain beyond those affairs in which the explorer was himself personally involved. Having very little competition, Champlain may have been a "great man" for the development of early Canada, but whether he measures up to contemporaries like William Bradford ("of Plimoth Plantation"), John Smith, or John Winthrop in the richness of his own personality is another matter entirely.

In a not dissimilar vein is Paula Blanchard's *The Life of Emily Carr*, yet another biographical study of one of the most fascinating and enigmatic figures of modern Canadian culture. In its own way, Emily Carr's career was heroic, as she fought to achieve a reputation in spite of her sex and her location at the farthest remove from the cultural centres of the nation. I started this book doubtful of the need for another Carr biography, but Blanchard gradually won me over by her surefooted negotiations through the many minefields of Carr's life and art. This biography is sensible rather than spectacular, but nonetheless impressive. What Blanchard does not do — in fairness, probably cannot do — is to place Emily Carr critically within the context of twentieth-century art, as opposed to twentieth-century Canadian art. We are told and shown enough to appreciate how important Carr was for the development of a Canadian aesthetic, but it remains unclear whether Carr has any significance beyond it. One suspects that it is her life, rather than her art, which is most important.

From Emily Carr to *"Coming Canadians": An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples* (by

Jean R. Burnet with Howard Palmer) is a considerable mental journey. For some years, McClelland and Stewart in association with the federal government's multiculturalism programme has been publishing booklength studies of Canada's various ethnic groups, and this work is intended to serve as a general introduction to that series. It exhibits all of the best (and worst) qualities of Canadian ethnic history. As a book to pick up and read, one suspects that only the most conscientious of book reviewers will get through it from cover to cover. As a source book on ethnicity in Canada, however, it is both unparalleled and extremely useful, offering a number of demographic tables and thematic surveys of the most important aspects of ethnic studies. There are precious few individual lives limned in *"Coming Canadians"*, and far too many catalogues of ethnic groups. The authors write of immigration to Canada in the years 1901 to 1914, for example:

> In particular, Austrians, German-Russians, Slovacks, Czechs, Hungarians, Estonians, Dutch, Belgians, Germans, Swedes, Danes, Finns, Norwegians, Mennonites, and Welsh came to establish group settlements, and several hundred blacks moved into the region of Edmonton. Many of the newcomers brought capital; all of them brought experience in dealing with North American conditions and were able to provide advice and support to neighbours (p. 27).

In discussing the ethnic credit union, we get: "Among the ethnic groups, large and small, that have formed credit unions are the Byelorussians, Croats, Danes, Dutch, Estonians, Germans, Hungarians, Japanese, Lithuanians, Poles, and Slovenes" (p. 69).

On the one hand, one sympathizes with the concern of ethnic scholars to get it right. Canada was and is a nation of immigrants. It is important that we understand the enormous complexity of our ethnic experience, that ethnic differences are not ignored, and that significant (and even numerically insignificant) groups are not overlooked. At the same time, lists and catalogues are not exactly compelling reading, and in the end, one has to wonder whether the goals of ethnic study are best served by such an approach, particularly as an overview to a fascinating series of individual volumes. This work is academically sound, but its presentation is far more formidable than need be the case. *"Coming Canadians"* is a book worth consulting, but is not really for reading.

Theodore J. Karamanski is an American scholar, whose *Fur Trade and Exploration: Opening the Far Northwest 1821-1852* — recently reissued in paperback edition — is a traditional narrative synthesis of the early activities of European fur traders in a region not often written about in such loving detail. The work has a distinctly old-fashioned air about it, since it offers few resonances of recent Canadian scholarship on the fur trade. The focus is on the fur traders themselves, with the narrative based largely on their own accounts published and unpublished. Native peoples, who loom so prominently in the work of most Canadian academics of the present generation, are for the most part anonymous helpers (and occasionally hindrances) in this account. One of the most fascinating in this regard is an unnamed Indian chieftainess of the Nahannis, who saved Robert Campbell's life on the Stikine River in 1838. According to Campbell, "She commanded the respect not only of her own people, but of the tribes they had intercourse with. She was a fine looking woman rather above the middle height and about 35 years old. In her actions and personal appearance she was more like the Whites than the pure Indian race. She had a pleasing face lit up with fine intelligent eyes, which when she was excited flashed like fire" (p. 149). Her husband, Campbell added, was a "nonentity". Karamanski does nothing more with Campbell's description beyond

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CHAMPLAIN

By Joe C.W. Armstrong. Macmillan of Canada, Toronto, 1987. 318 pp., illus. $29.95.

THE LIFE OF EMILY CARR

By Paula Blanchard. Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver and Toronto, 1987. 331 pp., illus. $26.95.

"COMING CANADIANS"
An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples

By Jean R. Burnet with Howard Palmer. McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1988. 253 pp., illus. $12.95.

FUR TRADE AND EXPLORATION
Opening the Far Northwest 1821-1852

By Theodore J. Karamanski. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman and London, 1988. 330 pp., illus. $24.95 paper.

FIRST OVER THE SISKIYOUS
Peter Skene Ogden's 1826-1827 Journey through the Oregon-California Borderlands

By Jeff LaLande. Oregon Historical Society Press, Portland, 1987. 149 pp., illus. $19.95.

RED RIVER STORY

By Alfred Silver. Ballantine Books, New York, 1988. 528 pp., map. $11.95 paper.

PEOPLE AND PLACE
Studies of Small Town Life in the Maritimes

Edited by Larry McCann. Acadiensis Press, Fredericton, 1988. 263 pp., illus., $12.95 paper.

VULCAN
The Making of a Prairie Community

By Paul Voisey. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1988. 341 pp., illus. $18.95 paper.

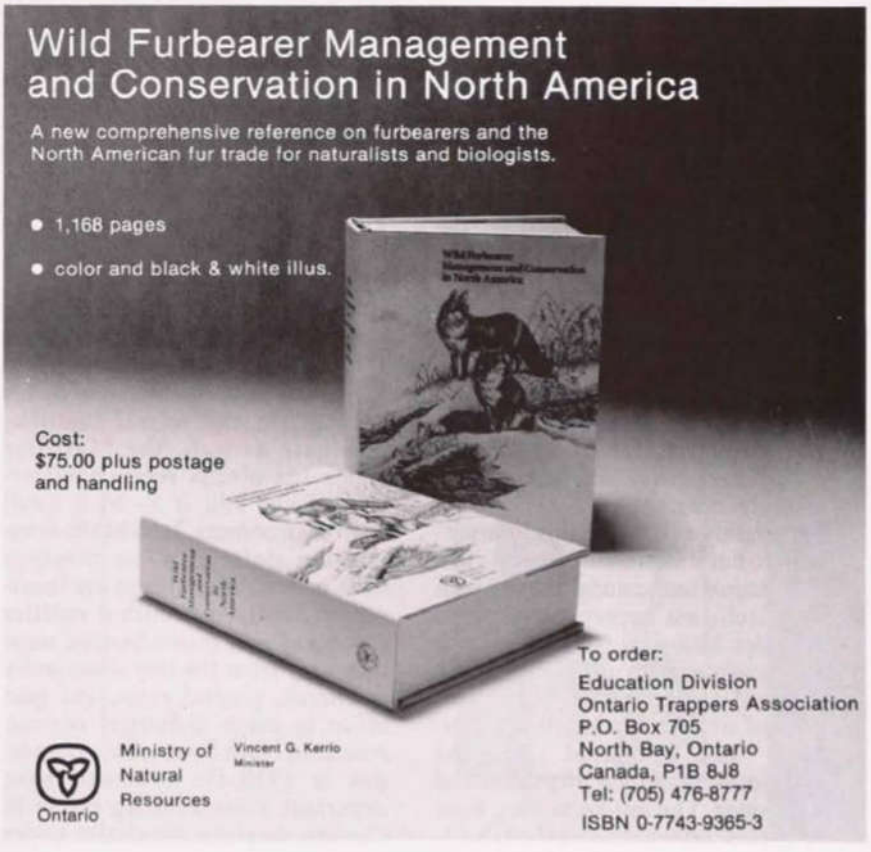
quoting it, thus ignoring the explicit racism of the fur trader involved.

Continual patterns of European limitations in dealing with Indians remain unanalyzed in this narrative, which simply takes the fur traders at their own words. Thus a second critical aspect of recent Canadian scholarship, involving the attempt to explore fur-trade sources for something more than factual evidence, plays no part in this study. The author spends much time defending his fur traders from George Simpson's critical comments, but none in exploring their own personalities and assumptions as revealed in their journals. What we have is fur-trade exploration Peter C. Newman style, but without that worthy's sensitivity to the underlying importance of a good anecdote. On its own terms, *Fur Trade and Exploration* does tell the story of the nineteenth-century exploration of the far Northwest in a coherent fashion, and readers will learn much — and can infer far more — from its pages.

Moving from Karamanski's narrative to Jeff LaLande's *First Over the Siskiyous: Peter Skene Ogden's 1826-1827 Journey through the Oregon-California Borderlands,* involves more than the shift from a larger canvas to a smaller one. Ogden's journal of this expedition was published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society in 1961, but according to LaLande the editors of this volume had a very imprecise notion of the local geography of the region traversed, leading to much misinterpretation of the route the explorer had taken. The Oregon Historical Society Press does its best to hook a readership for this new volume, claiming on the dustjacket of the book: "Part detective story, part adventure — unravels Odgen's [*sic*] exact route through the Siskiyou Mountains", and providing a number of maps and illustrations, many of the latter being photographs by the author taken on a journey retracing Ogden's steps. The text itself is fairly complex, however, consisting of the author's recapitulation of Ogden's travels with detailed commentary on the locations he described, or in some cases, failed adequately to describe. Ogden's journal is quoted at some length, but essentially this book is a series of revised footnotes to a text not commonly available to the reader. Only the most committed student of early Oregon history is likely to be willing to wade through the morass of detail, and for those who do, the question remaining at the end is simple: was the effort involved worth it, particularly since Ogden's placenames have not — with the exception of Mount Shasta — taken much hold in the region?

The author certainly succeeds in demonstrating that the 1961 editors (one of whom generously endorses this enterprise) were quite incorrect in their geographic attributions. He also shows that making such attributions without actually travelling the ground is a dangerous business. But the enterprise of revision in this volume has little larger interest to the reader. The "detective work" is not terribly exciting, and some of the author's conclusions, while interesting, are hardly very revealing. He explains Ogden's failure to mention Mount Shasta at several appropriate points in his journal, given the revised route, by arguing in one case that it was blocked by an intervening range of volcanic mountains, in another that he had mentioned it already (p. 43). He does not explore other possibilities, including Ogden's aesthetic assumptions. Indeed, given the importance attached to Ogden's descriptive verbiage in this study, it is somewhat disconcerting that little effort is made to explain or understand his language. Even more disconcerting, one comes away from this study with no greater understanding of Peter Skene Ogden than when one began it, since it is less Ogden than his later editors who are really the subject of discussion here.

Colourful personalities are certainly not absent in Alfred Silver's novel, *Red River Story.* Given the relative historical obscurity of the early settlement of Red River, it is



interesting to note the number of novelists who have found in these events a suitable setting for historical fiction. Silver's is only the latest in a long series of efforts to recreate the Red River episode in imaginative terms. Fiction should not be dismissed out of hand as a vehicle for serious historical appreciation, although it provides its own difficulties. Silver plainly understands some of them, writing in an "author's note" at the outset that "The people in this story all lived. . . . But this isn't a history book. These aren't the kind of people that history gets written about. There are gaps between the points in their lives at which the current of events swept them into the recording eye. I've tried to connect the points with straight lines". The best of the "Red River" novels remains Frederick Niven's *Mine Inheritance,* a work that reviewers of the time (1941) insisted reeked more of the archives than of artistic creativity. Much the same comment could be made of Silver's effort.

Niven had invented a young male protagonist, while Silver in effect creates a young female equivalent in the person of Kate MacPherson. Her adventures are played out against a one-dimensional background and with a series of cardboard historical figures who all too frequently speak in expository sentences taken straight from the documents, their words intended to help propel the historical narrative. The only one of the major players who comes alive at all is Cuthbert Grant, treated with great sympathy by the author. Silver's history comes straight from the pages of John Prebble and Marjorie Campbell, in which Lord Selkirk and his associates are clearly the "bad guys". He is certainly entitled to this interpretation, but it is in many respects less interesting and compelling than an approach that appreciated a more complex historical reality, in which the confrontation over Red River involved a large number of factions, each of which had a legitimate position and believed in the righteousness of their own cause and behaviour. The self-sustaining logic of events, rather than anybody's villainy, was the true culprit in Red River. Presenting such a picture in fictional form requires considerably more artistry, of course, than the traditional morality play of good guys versus bad guys, although it would be far more in keeping with the achievements of great literature. As for *Red River Story,* it settles for being a superior Harlequin Romance.

People and Place: Studies of Small Town Life in the Maritimes, edited by Larry McCann, suggests in its very title one of the most important dimensions of the historical study of people, whether individuals or as part of a group. The context of community is a critical one, for without some notion of frames of reference and terms of action, the lives of people can become curiously disembodied and abstract. The small town has been a major factor in the development of Canada, although it is a unit sadly neglected by Canadian historians fascinated on the one hand by the isolated farmstead of the early settlement period and on the other by the urban development of later years. The papers in this book are the result of a conference entitled "Small Town Life in the Maritimes" held at Mount Allison University in 1985 as a part of that university's Rural and Small Town Research and Studies Programme. Their publication is especially timely given the recent efforts to prevent the Canada Post Corporation to erode further the integrity of small towns by closing one of their central gathering places: the post office.

As the editor points out in his introduction and several contributors note as well, the Maritime region has always been characterized — and still is — by a small town environment. It lacks the dominating metropolis so common further west. Small towns are themselves hardly monolithic entities capable of easy generalization, since they vary from the tiny community of church, general store, and post office to major industrial centres; Amherst, Nova Scotia, for example, was in 1910 the twentieth most important manufacturing centre in Canada, despite a population under 10,000 people. Pictou Island, discussed in sympathetic detail in this book by Eric Ross, reached a population peak of 227 in 37 households in 1921, and has declined ever since. Nevertheless, the island, four and one-half miles long and one and a quarter miles wide, was in its heyday an integral community of Scots Highlanders who fished and farmed, while today its only future seems to be as a haven for summer cottagers from cities in the United States and Canada. As George J. De Benedetti and Richard J. Price point out in their contribution, however, the idea of the extinction of the small town is a myth. In the United States, for example, nonmetropolitan population growth exceeded metropolitan growth during the 1970s, and in Canada small towns and urban places grew at the same rate during that decade. Generalizations about small town decline are, therefore, dangerous. But this little book succeeds in underscoring the need to study and understand the small town and the lives people lead in it, and serves as a useful corrective to the general tendency to think of Canada (and the United States) as countries where urbanization and the growth of large metropolitan areas are the only trends.

Small towns are hardly confined to the Maritime region, and in *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community,* historian Paul Voisey discusses in detail the settlement of a series of such towns (and their surrounding farms) in the Vulcan area of southern Alberta. Although such community studies are common in British and American academic historiography, they have only infrequently been undertaken in Canada, partly because prevailing sentiments within the academy in this country have always regarded such studies as "regional" at best and, more typically, "local" history within the amateur tradition. Few Canadian historians are aware that W. L. Morton's first book (and arguably his best one) was a history of Gladstone, Manitoba. Morton's *Third Crossing* and Voisey's *Vulcan* are separated by two generations of scholarship, and bear little methodological or conceptual relationship

to one another. Fully aware of the denigration of the local study, Voisey almost overemphasizes the ways in which his study can be utilized to test existing generalizations about the settlement experience, particularly in Western Canada. But the community, apart from its analytical value, does offer one way to organize the study of the lives of hundreds of people who would otherwise remain part of the anonymous faceless past.

A brief review can hardly do justice to the richness of Voisey's work, which touches on a number of major themes of the settlement process and the collective lives of the settlers. The material on the organization of churches, for example, emphasizes the relative weakness of denominationalism on this last Canadian frontier, while the discussion of leisure-time activities demonstrates both the richness of social life in the premetropolitanized Canadian West and the importance of the small towns of the area in organizing it. Voisey recognizes the particular advantages for social life provided by wheat farming — which requires periods of intensive activity but not necessarily on a daily basis — but even so, the number of social and fraternal organizations and activities (including sports) in the Vulcan area was truly impressive, totally demolishing any thought that rural and small town life in Canada was necessarily dull and lacking in cultural opportunities. The automobile and the radio may have liberated people on one level, but the new technology helped destroy a viable community life and culture. *Vulcan* is a major scholarly achievement that should also have great resonances for any Canadian reader. It deserves any prizes that it wins.

Socrates once said that the unexamined life is not worth living. In the same vein, history that does not examine lives is not worth reading. No present formula exists for the examination, as the books discussed above well demonstrate. The end, not the means, is what matters.

J. M. Bumsted teaches history at St. John's College, University of Manitoba.

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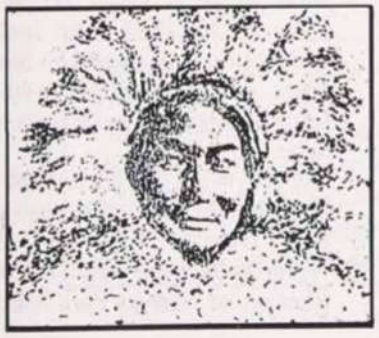

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THE PACKET

Letters, Notes and Opinion

Mad Donald's Journal

I was delighted with the illustrations which you selected for my article "The Madness of Donald Mackay" [*The Beaver*, June/July 1988]. I found the colour photo of Mackay's journal of 1796-8, from the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, particularly appropriate, but my pleasure turned to dismay as I realized that I had never examined this journal! It covers, in fact, the important voyage which Mackay made, assisted only by his Métis wife and her sister, from Osnaburgh House to York Factory in the summer of 1797. My article, then, is incorrect when it states that "Donald Mackay's progress to York Factory cannot be traced in any surviving Hudson's Bay Company journal" — it can, and the one you have illustrated is it.

I've now examined the journal, and it is very informative. It shows that Mackay's party made its way from Osnaburgh, by way of the English and Winnipeg River systems, to Lake Winnipeg; passed over the usual canoe route by the east shore of the Lake to the Narrows and then the west shore as far as Grand Rapids (barely escaping when their canoe almost swamped in high winds); and after waiting in vain for some Hudson's Bay traders to pass, proceeded with difficulty to the Hill River route down to York Factory. The Company employees whom Mackay met on the route, including William Tomison, knew nothing of any duties which he might be assigned, and Governor Colen, the Chief at York, seemed cool and unprepared when Mackay finally arrived. Mackay's version of the events at York Factory during the winter of 1797-8 corresponds more or less to Colen's, which I used for my article, except that Mackay presents his behaviour as the natural response to unfriendly treatment by his fellow officers, and reports that on one occasion those officers attacked and disarmed him.

The journal also shows that Mackay's wife, the mother of his son William, was the mixed-blood daughter of James Sutherland, a Hudson's Bay Company trader whose biography, by Shirlee Anne Smith, is in volume four of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Mackay is notable in that he does call this woman his wife, and not just "the mother of my reputed (or adopted) children", or "the woman who lives under my protection", or any of the other prevaricating phrases by which many fur traders hoped to avoid legal responsibility for their "country wives" and children later in life.

My article has provoked some correspondence, and I should like to correct and amplify as follows. The mixed-blood son of Donald Mackay who accompanied his father to Nova Scotia was called Donald, junior; John Mackay, ancestor of the Mackays of Barney's River, was the son of Donald senior and Mary Mackenzie, his Scottish wife. The diary of Donald Mackay was brought to light by Charles D. Denney of Edmonton, who discovered it in the hands of the Mackay family and saw to it that the Hudson's Bay Company Archives received a copy; it is this copy which I used.

Since my article was submitted for publication, volume six of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* has appeared, containing a biography of Donald Mackay by John Jackson, a recognized authority. This article provides several facts which were unknown to me, and contains a full bibliography of sources. Thanks for the opportunity to correct these errors.

Harry W. Duckworth,
Winnipeg,
Manitoba.

Lost Tribe

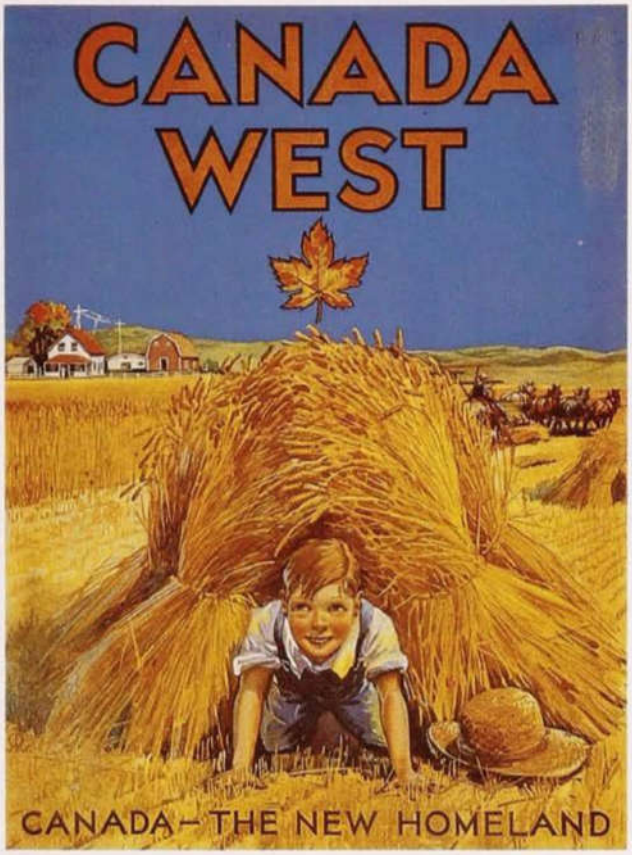
One of the unknown inland tribes of Charles Lillard's *The Ghost People of Vancouver Island* [*The Beaver*, April/May 1988] may not be a mystery after all. The mythical "Upatse Satuch" sound like the real-life Opetchesaht.

The Opetchesaht live precisely where the Upatse Satuch were said to be: on the Somass River east of Barkley Sound. Their homeland is in the middle of Vancouver Island, though linked to the sea by a long inlet.

The Opetchesaht were quite unlike their Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka) neighbours. They lived up-river rather than on tidewater. They stalked deer and elk in the highlands; other tribes rarely ate land animals. They probably spoke a different language. The Opetchesaht seem to be a Salish people who adopted Nuu-chah-nulth language and culture only about two hundred years ago. They might well have inspired tales of a mysterious inland tribe.

Like the Upatse Satuch, the Opetchesaht were raided by intruders from the east coast. Nevertheless, the band still flourishes on its river at Port Alberni.

David L. Stone,
North Vancouver,
B.C.



Opening the Canadian West

Before the great flood of settlers poured into the Canadian West, mapmakers crossed the uncharted regions finding out what was there. Their exploits and challenges are described by Jeffrey Murray of the National Archives of Canada in the February/March issue of *The Beaver.* The next issue will also contain articles on A.D. Kean, Canada's cowboy movie-maker; the trials of the Acadians and the struggle to survive at York Factory. Read these and other fascinating articles and reviews in the February/March issue of *The Beaver.*

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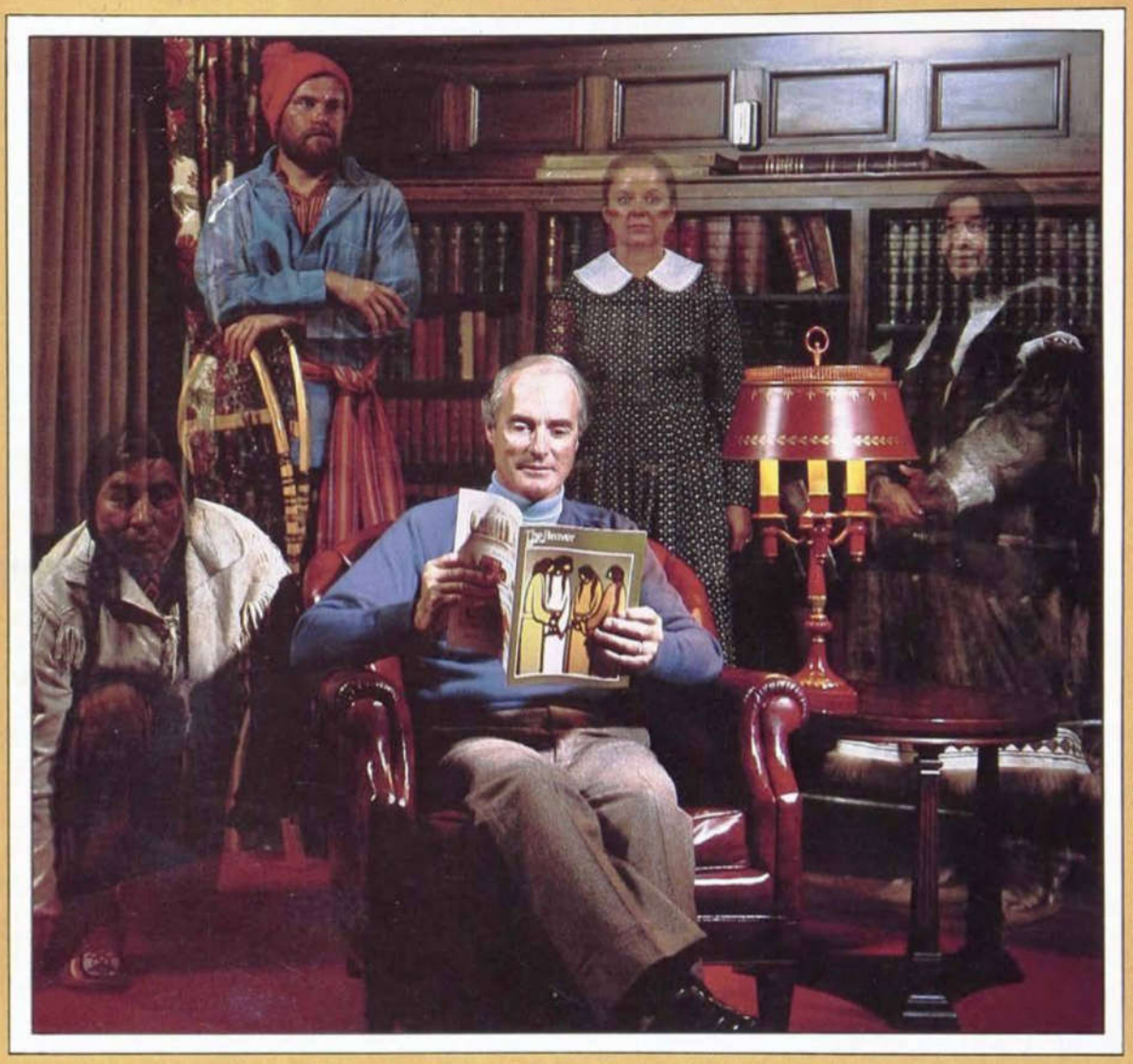

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